

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL.

CONDUCTED BY CHARLES DICKENS.

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

N^o. 264.]

SATURDAY, MAY 14, 1864.

[PRICE 2d.

QUITE ALONE.

BOOK THE FIRST: CHILDHOOD.

CHAPTER XXIV. LILY IS LEFT ALONE IN A STRANGE COUNTRY.

In the court-yard of the post-office, not far from the hotel, Lily was introduced to an enormous machine—like a hackney-coach, an omnibus, and a post-chaise, stuck together—painted yellow, and surmounted in the front by a kind of hackney-cab, and in the rear by a tremendous pile of luggage covered with a tarpaulin. The formidable edifice was mounted on very heavy wheels, and to it were harnessed, by very ragged looking ropes, six horses, three abreast, and as ragged as the cords which confined them. This was the Paris diligence belonging to the Messageries Royales of Messrs. Lafitte, Caillard, and Company, and such of my courteous readers who may have attained middle-age, and went to school in France, have probably journeyed by this same lumbering, lagging, and comfortless conveyance.

The hackney-coach compartment, which held six, was called the intérieur; the omnibus-looking compartment, which afforded want of accommodation for eight passengers, went by the name of the rotonde; and that portion of the vehicle which has been likened to a post-chaise, and in which three persons could sit, sufficiently ill at ease, was entitled the coupé. The lady had retained the whole of this coupé: one place for herself, another for Lily, and the third for her temper; although it is questionable whether the entire diligence would have been big enough to hold that. After a time, an individual in a semi-military uniform, with an embroidered badge on his arm, and a laced cap and a peak to it, who was the conducteur or guard of the machine, came to the window and read off the passengers' names from a way-bill; then a tall gendarme in a cocked-hat and jack-boots, who had come, it is to be presumed, to see Lily off, and to ascertain by ocular inspection whether she was carrying an infernal machine to Paris, to blow up the Orleans dynasty withal, waved one of his buck-skin gauntlets in token of dismissal; the postilion, a frightful-looking creature, in monstrous jack-boots, and with a quantity of parti-coloured ribbons, all very dirty, streaming from his hat,

cracked his whip, and began to scream out some abusive language to his horses, and the top-heavy caravan jolted out of the post-office yard.

They were swaying and staggering over the ill-paved streets of the town, when a carriage which Lily had seen before, passed them at a steadily rapid pace. It was the green berline which had been lashed to the deck of the Harlequin, and reclining in it was the invalid gentleman with the yellow face. There was room in the rumble for M. Franz Stimm, and there his place properly was; but he was a confidential courier, and, the carriage being broad, occupied a place by his master's side.

"There is that little girl again," the sallow man remarked, fretfully, as they passed the diligence.

"She is ver graziosa; I gif her some joggo-late, my lord generale," returned the courier.

"Don't my lord me, Stimm," peevishly exclaimed the invalid; "nor general me either. I never was the one, and I'm sick of having been the other. I can't get that little girl's face out of my head. It haunts me. Who can she be?"

"Bah! bas grand zhose," Monsieur Stimm observed, in reply. "Za mère elle est une ogatine; ouf! une diablesse. I zink I zee her somewhere in de zeatre, dancing on de cord or jumping on de horse. Haoup-là!"

But the diligence was by this time many yards behind, and the invalid, pettishly asking for some orange-flower, and being, as usual, persuaded to take what Monsieur Franz Stimm termed "gognac," forgot, for the time, the bright little face which, he said, had haunted him.

The occupants of the coupé travelled all that day along dusty roads, for the most part bordered with tall trees, like walking-sticks surmounted by birch-brooms. The perspective was not enchanting. The fields were of an ugly ashen green, and divided by ditches, not hedges. There were no pretty villages by the roadside; what buildings there were, did not get beyond tumbledown stone hovels, at the doors of which toothless old women, with their heads bandaged up, sat at spinning-wheels, or dirty children sprawled. From time to time they met a man walking, in a blouse and sabots, powdered with dust from head to foot: a knapsack on his back, and a quantity of ribbons streaming from his hat. Sometimes he looked wobegone, and

blubbered; sometimes he whistled cheerily, and was defiant, and drunk. This was Jean Pierre, or Gros Guillaume, the conscript who had drawn a bad number, and was trudging to the regimental dépôt. Frequently, on coming to the base of a steep hill, the diligence would stop, and the conducteur, coming to the coupé door, politely invite them to descend. Then they would have to walk up hill, toiling after the diligence, for half a mile or so; but there were no wild flowers by the way. There were loathsome beggars instead, who, in twos and threes, dotted the highway from Boulogne to Paris, flaunting their tatters, exhibiting their sores, holding up on high their cadaverous babies, and, in droning, monotonous tone, repeating: "Charité, s'il vous plaît! Petit sou Anglais! Petit morceau de biscuit Anglais!" A recent change in the order of things in Paris has had, at least, one gratifying result;—the roadside beggars have disappeared.

They stayed half an hour, at five o'clock, to dine at Abbeville, where there was a noisy crowded table d'hôte. Lily could eat nothing, save a spoonful of soup, and a slice from an enormous melon which decorated the table. Five francs a head were charged for this repast, which gave the lady an opportunity of storming at Lily, at herself, and at the world, for the next twenty miles. A little way out of Abbeville, some men were singeing the bristles off a newly slaughtered pig, in a field; and the odour of this porcine suetee borne on the breeze, gave Lily a notion of incipient crackling, and made her almost hungry.

They went jogging, rumbling, clattering on, the postilion cracking his whip and screaming, and the horses, not to be behindhand, screaming too. They travelled all night; but Lily could sleep but little for the incessant jolting. At about six in the morning they stopped at a pretty large town, where, from an inn-door, a shock-headed barefooted girl brought out to the coupé two white bowls of scalding hot coffee, with a liberal allowance of milk therein, and two huge slices of bread. Lily was able to breakfast very heartily, and, though her feet felt chill and numbed, was in better spirits by the time they arrived at St. Denis—about eleven o'clock—when she was told that they were within six miles of Paris.

The lady's temper had been throughout detestable, and she had seldom spoken to Lily, save to scold her. As they approached the capital, however, her face brightened, and, at Montmartre, she condescended to inform the child that Paris was the only place worth living in in the whole world.

"Shall we be very happy there?" asked the little girl, with a timid look.

"We?" repeated the lady, coldly. "You are going to school. Do you think I am a little bambine, to learn lessons and be put in the corner en pénitence, as you will be if you are not sage? I pray you not to repeat such absurdity. There

will be one Paris for me, and another Paris for you, ma petite."

They entered by the Porte St. Denis, then a barrier, where sundry custom-house officers came to the window, asking whether there was anything to declare, and poking long spiked sticks into the luggage beneath the tarpaulin. They took away a bottle of wine from a stout lady in the intérieur, and a veal-pie from a countryman in the rotonde, the possessors of those edibles and potables having been foolish enough not to uncork the one, nor cut a slice out of the other. For, in those days, as now, everything eatable or drinkable, non-entamé, paid octroi duty, or gate-tolls, to the good city of Paris.

The diligence clattered up and down several stony streets, with no pavements, with no gas-lamps, but, instead, clumsy lanterns suspended to the centre of ropes slung across from house to house, and crowded with people who seemed to walk, preferentially, in the gutter. A great many of the men wore blue shirts above their clothes, and numbers of the women had white caps, in lieu of bonnets, on their heads. Lily thought the whole scene very unlike Stockwell.

Arrived at a large coach-office in a street called Grenelle Saint-Honoré, and in the yard of which half a dozen machines, as huge, as yellow, and as clumsy as the Boulogne diligence, were slumbering without horses, and where a score of postilions and conductors were smoking pipes and lounging about, they found another custom-house, and had to undergo a fresh examination of luggage. Then the lady's passport was again inspected, and at last taken away from her altogether, with an intimation that she might reclaim it ten days thence at the Préfecture of Police. The lady engaged a carriage hung very close to the ground, and drawn by two little white horses, whose harness was very ragged, and whose knees were very bandy. The driver wore a glazed hat, a red waistcoat, and had a redder face.

Up and down more narrow stony streets, and then they crossed a wide and magnificent thoroughfare skirted by lofty mansions and splendid shops, with wide branching trees along the intervals of the foot-pavement, and thronged with people, and horses, and carriages.

"Oh, what a beautiful street!" cried the child. "Do look at the carriages, and the shops, and those flags; and, oh, here is a whole regiment of soldiers!"

"Beautiful!" echoed the lady, with complaisant disdain. "I should think so, little ignoramus. It is the finest street in the world. It is the Boulevard des Italiens."

But they soon left it, and dived into more streets, broader, newer, and cleaner than the filthy lanes of the old quarter of the city. Then the houses grew fewer, and the gardens more frequent, and the coachman, turning in his boot, called through the window:

"Was it the Rue de la Pépinière, or the Rue de Courcelles, the bourgeoise said?"

"De Courcelles, ganache!" replied the countess, addressed as *bourgeoise*.

"Thanks for the compliment," the driver, who was a good-natured fellow, replied. "Je vous la souhaite belle et bonne, madame. Am I to have anything else by way of pour-boire? Hah-heup! Ostrogoth of a rhinoceros!" The latter speech was addressed to one of the white horses, which was essaying to lunch on his neighbour's near blinker. And they went on again.

They reached a street where there were no houses to be seen, only a double succession of staring white stone-walls, of different heights, and, here and there, a heavy green door. At one of these doors, the number five, the carriage drew up. The coachman rang a bell which dangled by a long wire from the wall, and this was presently answered by a lad in a shabby livery, and whose face was fearfully scarred with the small-pox. Lily's trunk was alone removed, and the coachman was ordered to wait. The pock-marked lad conducted them across a dreary court-yard, in the interstices of whose stones rank dank herbage grew, up a broken flight of mildewed stone steps, across a bare hall, or vestibule, papered green, which smelt very mouldy and felt very damp, and so into a dismal saloon with an oak floor, laid in a pattern like a chess-board, and which was so highly polished, that Lily slipped on her entrance, and was very near tumbling down.

She was bidden to sit on a vast chintz-coloured sofa, and remained there, frightened, and listening to the harsh ticking of an ormolu-clock on the mantelshelf. The lady left her at the expiration of ten minutes, and Lily thought she could hear voices in an adjoining apartment. She remained on the sofa for another ten minutes, and then she heard a door bang violently. Through one of the tall windows (which reached almost to the ground) she saw the form of the handsome lady retreating across the court-yard. The shabby lad opened the door for her. She ascended the carriage. She was gone. Lily's heart sank within her. She was now left Quite Alone indeed.

CHAPTER XXV. LA PENSION MARCASSIN.

THE child's hand was on the handle of the lock; but it turned on the other side, and a person came in.

She was tall and shapely, and had once been handsome; but she had bidden farewell to middle age, and, without pleading guilty to imminent antiquity, would have had little chance, if arraigned, of averting a true bill. Of her good looks, only enough was left to make her angry at the remembrance of having been comely. Her hands, attenuated and long fingered though they were, retained their symmetry, and were dazzlingly white. But they were heartless-looking hands—cruel hands, more accustomed, if manual expression can be eloquent, to give buffets than to give charity. The nails looked as though they had been bitten, not pared. Her hair, iron, not silver

grey, was disposed in plain bands beneath a rigid cap of point lace if you will, but hard and spiky, as though it had been wrought out of some white metal. She was tall, very tall, and was draped in one long black silk dress, more like a pillow-case than a gown, falling in few folds, and those stiff and angular. A great cross of dull gold was at her neck, and that was all the ornament she wore. Her voice was chilly and windy. The words came as though a door had been slightly opened, a draught of cold air let in, and then closed.

"I am Mademoiselle Marcassin," she said.

She spoke in English, but with a foreign accent, fainter and harder than that which marked the speech of the strange lady. Her words fell like drops of iced water upon Lily's trembling heart.

"Stand before me, here, in the light, so," continued Mademoiselle Marcassin. "Listen to me with all your attention."

She placed her white thin hands on the child's shoulders, turned her round, and dressed her up, in a military manner, by the window. Anon she drew aside a louvre shutter, and the whole daylight came in, white and almost blinding.

"I wish you to see me very plainly," she remarked. "Look in my eyes. Mark them well. Tell me if they look soft and yielding."

Lily did mark them. She was too frightened to say what she thought, but to her mind those eyes were grey, hard, baleful, merciless.

"I am your schoolmistress," went on Mademoiselle. "You are sent here to be taught, and to be punished if you misconduct yourself. Here you will learn what discipline is. Silence!" Lily had no more idea of uttering a word than of dancing a gavotte, or setting the house on fire. "The first lesson you are to learn must be to hold your tongue."

"This is the last time," she pursued, "that I shall speak to you in English. You had better forget that I ever addressed you in that tongue. I shall address you in French when I think you have been long enough here to comprehend me, and if you do not understand, you will be punished. What do you know? I mean, what have you learned away there in England?"

With much blushing and faltering, Lily went over the scant schedule of her book-learning. Mademoiselle Marcassin heard her in contemptuous silence.

"As ignorant as a squirrel," she resumed, when the child had done, "and, I dare say, quite as restless and troublesome. Here you will be taught as well as tamed. We cannot begin too soon."

She rang a bell, and in a few minutes—passed by Lily in something closely approximating to breathless terror—a low tap came to the door, and a lady, who looked, as to garb and demeanour, gold cross and all, a duplicate edition of Mademoiselle Marcassin, only she was somewhat younger, shorter, and stouter, came into the room.

"This," said the lady superior of the establishment, "is Mademoiselle Espréménil, the head governess. She will take you into the schoolroom and tell you your duties. In all things she is to be obeyed even as I am. Woe be to you if you are insubordinate. Now go."

And, without another word, she turned on her heel and disappeared. The lady addressed as Mademoiselle Espréménil took Lily's hand, and, in equal silence, led her away.

They traversed the hall and another room, which was Mademoiselle Marcassain's private salle à manger. Lily noticed that all this part of the house, though it was bare and comfortless, was very stately and polished, and had a curious pervading odour of cold stones—for cold stones have an odour—and beeswax. But when the head governess pushed aside a green baize door, and they crossed a high walled gravelled playground, they entered upon quite another region.

Everything was barer, everything more comfortless; everything, moreover, had a squalid, frowning, prison-like aspect. From the moment Lily entered that house to the moment she left it, she could not divest herself of the notion that she had *done something*, that she had committed some crime, and that she was in tribulation for it, under the especial auspices of Mademoiselle Marcassain and her subordinates.

There might have been twenty girls, between the ages of ten and fifteen, in the first whitewashed schoolroom they entered. It was a frightful looking room; its sepulchral whiteness relieved only by the dingy black of the transverse desks, a big black stove in one corner, from which a blacker pipe crawled along the ceiling like a serpent, and a black board supported by a double frame—a kind of elephantine easel.

All these girls looked as though they had done something, and were much disturbed in their minds in consequence. The teachers, however, of whom there were two present, seemed to be of a contrary opinion, and to hold that they had done nothing, and did not mean to do anything, at least of what was good. For which reason they continuously girded at the twenty pupils.

"The first - class," remarked Mademoiselle Espréménil, dryly, to Lily, as she marched her through. She made the observation in a tone similar to that which a female turnkey might use in pointing out the refractory ward.

A girl with a merry face and wavy black hair could not resist the temptation, as Lily passed her, of pulling slyly at her dress, and making (in perfect good nature, be it understood) a face at her. But the quick eye of the head governess caught the grimace in transit, and she was down on the merry one in a moment, like Thor's hammer.

"Five bad points for Mademoiselle Marygold," she exclaimed; and then, turning to the culprit, continued, "you are becoming a Rothschild in bad points. Beware of the day of reckoning."

Mademoiselle Marygold set up a whimper, as

a governess—whose profile was so like a hatchet, that when she bent over the girls at their writing lessons, they were apt to feel the backs of their necks to make sure that they were safe on their shoulders—chalked five crosses against the Marygoldian name on the black board. She had a tremendous balance of black marks already in her disfavour.

"The second class room," said the head governess, as they entered another apartment, somewhat smaller than the first, but holding an equal number of scholars.

None of the girls ventured beyond a quick and furtive moment of looking up as the two passed through. At the door was a young lady aged apparently about eleven, with a very dirty face, the result of her having rubbed her countenance with inky hands, and the carbon therein having mingled with the tears which streamed from her eyes. This young lady was on her knees in a corner by the door; and very uncomfortable in that attitude she seemed to be. There was reason enough for it, as she was kneeling on a square wooden ruler, the sharpest edge upwards, specially provided for the mortification of her flesh. And, furthermore, the young lady's head was decorated with an enormous fool's cap of grey paper, decorated at either side by lengthy bows or ears of black crape, and which gave the poor little thing somewhat of the appearance of Mr. Punch in half mourning.

"Again!" said the head governess, regarding this forlorn little personage with severe disdain. "Again, Mélanie! Thou goest the way for the Prix Monthyon, truly. A pretty Rosière, my faith! She is in penitence," she continued, turning to Lily. "She passes half her time in abject degradation."

Here a fresh burst of sobs came from the unhappy Mélanie, whose face, as it could not be much blacker, became absolutely fairer for the outbreak; for the tears traced little white channels for themselves on her cheeks till she scumbled them all together in a muddy neutral tint. They left this luckless Niobe, and went into another schoolroom.

It was the largest of all, and there were perhaps forty pupils in it. But they were all very little girls—none of them older, and many younger, than Lily. Likewise there were no desks in this room, save those which served as rostra for the governesses. And the forms on which the children sat were slightly raised one above the other in a kind of amphitheatre.

"This is the third class, and you belong to it," said Mademoiselle Espréménil, with a slight yawn, as though tired of officiating as mistress of the ceremonies to this very insignificant guest. "Mademoiselle Hudault, here is a little one to be put sur le banc des petites. Her name is—my faith! Madame forgot to tell me her name, but you will know it in good time."

This she said in French to the teacher. She continued in indifferent English to the child,

"What your name of baptism, eh?"

"Lily—Lily Floris, ma'am," answered the child, meekly.

"I ask you for your name of baptism, not your name of family," interposed Mademoiselle Esprémenil, sharply. "There are half a dozen Lilies in the school," she added to her coadjutor, "and three in this class. That will never do. Never mind, Madame will find some other name to her. *Elle n'est pas grand' chose*—she is not of much account—I fancy;" and she nodded to Mademoiselle Hudault, and retired, leaving Lily trembling in the middle of the class.

Mademoiselle Hudault was not ill natured, but she was over-worked. Her eyes could not be everywhere, consequently the child who was nearest her, and on whom hereytes most frequently lighted, had, habitually, rather a bad time of it; she was the scapegoat, and suffered for the sins of the rest of the forty. The forty were certainly enough to try the patience of Mademoiselle, or of any other mortal woman. Some of them were always going to sleep, and had to be shouted up into wakefulness. Others, who were day children, would creep on all fours to the corner where the baskets containing their dinners were deposited, abstract hunks of bread, bunches of grapes, or morsels of cold charcuterie—generally strong in the porcine element—and essay to munch surreptitiously behind their books or slates. Then detection followed, and there was a disturbance, and the contraband provisions were seized, and Mademoiselle Hudault would threaten to confiscate "*la totalité*," or to put the whole of the class "*en pénitence*." Add to this the fact that the majority of the pupils who had lessons to get by heart were in the habit of repeating their tasks to themselves in a monotonous drone—that when a band of small disciples was called up for "*repetition*," there was sure to be a book lost, or a page in an essential part torn out—that Julie was always making complaints against Amanda for pinching her, and that the bitter lamentations of Eulalie in consequence of Hortense having crammed her left ear full of slate pencil, were well-nigh incessant—that the atmosphere of the class-room was close almost to stifling point, and the odour exceedingly unpleasant—and that Mademoiselle Hudault's sole assistant in teaching and managing the forty girls was a depressed young person of sixteen, who was a little deaf, and somewhat lame, and was understood to be maintained out of charity by Mademoiselle Marcassin, and it may be judged how far the mistress of the class was over-worked, and that her nightly couch was not a bed of roses.

Mademoiselle Hudault, who spoke no English, made signs to Lily to sit at the extremity of the form nearest her, and there the child crouched in half-listless, half-alarmed quiescence. The strange noise confused her, the heavy drowsy smell sickened her. She was very tired and shaken by her journey; she had eaten nothing since the morning; the class-room began to swim round; then all faded into a murky haze, and she fell into a

trance that was half sleeping and half swooning.

She revived to find herself in a little pallet-bed, in a long low hospital-like room with white-washed walls. On either side, as far as the eye could reach, were more pallets, and over against her, stretched in interminable perspective, a corresponding line of white ghastly-looking couches.

There was somebody at her pillow. It was the merry young lady with the wavy black hair, who had pulled her dress and made a face at her, and who had been apostrophised as Mademoiselle Marygold. No sooner did Lily open her eyes than this young lady proceeded to kiss her on both cheeks with great heartiness, bidding her (to Lily's delight), in English, lie still for a dear, and she would soon be well.

"You're English and I'm English," quoth the merry young lady, who spoke with extreme rapidity, as if to make up for lost time, and compensate for the many hours during which she was compelled to hold her tongue. "And Madame (that's Mademoiselle Marcassin), but we call her Madame, although she's never been married, to distinguish her from the rest of the governesses, who are all old frumps, and Mademoiselles of course. We're both English, and as you can't speak a word of French yet, Madame says I'm to take care of you, and tell you things, and sit by your side in the third class till you're able to get on by yourself. And oh! what fun to be in the third class, and I'm going on for fifteen, and I shall escape that horrible first class, with Mademoiselle Glagon—icicle's her name, and icicle's her nature—and Ma'mselle Esprémenil—we call her the hippopotamus—bothering us all day long, to say nothing of Madame; and when she comes in there's always a blow up. And now tell me all about yourself, my little darling. I'm seven years older than you; but we're the only two English girls in this jail of a place—and it is a jail, and worse than a jail—and we must be great cronies."

Here Miss Marygold paused: less, it is to be apprehended, for want of matter than for want of breath. Lily's answer had to be given very slowly and very feebly, and its tenor was mainly confined to an inquiry as to how she came there, in broad daylight, and in that bed?

"You weren't very well, and dozed off like; and you couldn't understand when Ma'mselle Hudault told you to wake up, and that she'd box your ears if you didn't; Madame don't allow it, but Ma'mselle can't help her temper sometimes; she's not such a cross old thing as the others, but she's always in a hurry, and that makes her hasty, and then one of the girls reminded Ma'mselle that you couldn't speak French, and another said you were ill, and then they threw some wine-and-water (out of one of the day-girls' bottles) over your face, and you didn't wake up, and so, as you couldn't walk, you were carried up to this bedroom, which is Dormitory Number Three, and the doctor came and said

you would do very nicely after you had had some sleep and some soup, and I'm to sleep next to you; and, upon my word, here comes Annette with the soup, and it's as nasty as ever, I do declare!"

The plateful of soup which a bony female servant, with a tall white cap, and a yellow silk handkerchief crossed over her breast, brought to the bedside, was certainly not nice. It was very hot, and thick, but it had a sour smell.

"Beans, cabbages, and tallow," remarked Miss Marygold, in contemptuous disparagement of the potage. "That's what we're fed upon at the Pension Marcassin, with cold boiled horse and vinegar-and-water to make up. You'd better eat it. Not eating your soup is called rebellion here. Madame says that Atheists and Voltaireans alone refuse to eat their soup. What, can't you eat it? Well, it must be swallowed, somehow, and to keep things quiet and comfortable, I'll eat it myself."

The which she presently proceeded to do, swallowing the nauseous compound in great gulps: not assuredly through greediness, for she made many wry faces as she ate, but apparently fearful lest some emissary of authority should discover her in the act. Annette, the gaunt servant, looked on in silence, and seemingly not in disapproval. She was not the cook, and she knew how very nasty the soup was. Nay, when Miss Marygold had carefully scraped up the last spoonful, and returned the plate to her, Annette produced from the pocket of her capacious apron two slices of bread, pressed close together upon an intermediate layer of plum jam. This dulcet sandwich, she expressed by signs, was to be eaten by Lily, and, indeed, the child needed but little persuasion, for, though her gorge rose at the soup, she was half famished with hunger.

"Annette's a good sort," went on Miss Marygold, when the gaunt servant, with a grin of satisfaction at Lily's returning appetite, had departed, "and never tells tales. We should be half starved if it wasn't for the bread-and-jam, for not half of us can eat the nasty messes they serve up in the refectory. I think the girls who have got money pay her to bring 'em nice things, and then she's a kind-hearted soul, and gives away out of her profits to the poor ones and the little ones."

Lily said that it was very kind of Annette, and emboldened by the kind merry face of her companion, ventured to ask if it would soon be tea-time?

"Tea-time!" echoed Miss Marygold. "Bless you, my pet. You'll never see any tea here. Why, only princesses and duchesses drink tea in Paris. Ma'mselle Marcassin has tea once a month, when the Abbé Prudhomme comes to catechise the girls, and prepare them for their first communion. Are you a Catholic, dear? I'm not, and Ma'mselle Espréménil says I'm a heretic, and Ma'mselle Glaçon says that out of the pale of the Church there is no salvation, and the girls tease my life out, because I don't cross

myself, and don't believe in purgatory; and when madame has tea, Annette says she makes it with boiling orange-flower water, and puts rum into it, and honey, and barley-sugar, and chocolate drops, and all kinds of nasty things. Tea! You'd better forget all about tea. We have hot milk and bread in the morning at eight, and vegetables, cheese, and wine (that's the vinegar-and-water I mean), at twelve; that's called breakfast number two; and at five o'clock—it's just half-past now, and the clock was striking when Annette brought you the soup—we have that horrible stuff you couldn't eat, or another soup that's worse, and some meat that's either half raw or half burnt, and potatoes messed up in all kinds of funny ways, and some salad that's never fresh, and that's all till the next morning. Tea! Not if Madame knows it."

Miss Marygold paused again for respiration. Her lungs replenished with a fresh supply of oxygen, she informed Lily (who lay very quietly in her bed, soothed though fatigued, and with a smiling face upturned towards her companion) that her name was Mary Marygold, for shortness called Polly; but that the diminutive in question was only made use of in England, and that here Mary Marygold being considered tautological, and there being many Marie-Jeanes, Marie-Claudes, Marie-Françoises, and Marie-Louises in the school, she was customarily addressed as Mary-Gold, as though the one-half were her christian name, and the other her patronymic.

"And a poor neglected Marygold I am," she continued, shaking her wavy hair. "My father was a rich man. He had beautiful large bookseller's shop at Exeter, down in Devonshire, you know; but he failed in business. He was what you call bankrupt, though he paid fourteen-and-sixpence in the pound. And then we came over here: I and pa, and my little brother Joey. And Joey died in the cholera year, ever so long ago. And he's buried in the Fosse Commune, the poor people's grave at the Montmartre Cemetery.

"All pa's money was gone," she went on, wiping her eyes. "He got work as a printer in the office where they print the English newspaper—Galignani's Messenger they call it. But he couldn't keep it, through his eyesight being so bad. And now he's a kind of parish clerk to an English chapel in the Champs Elysées, where you and I will go on Sundays, my darling; and he picks up a little by interpreting, and showing the museums and places to English travellers stopping at the hotels. Poor dear pa, he has a hard job to get along! He placed me here at school as an articled pupil at three hundred francs a year, and it's as much as ever he can do to pay it; but I learn as much as ever I can, and I've been here two years and a half, and when my time's out, which will be in another eighteen months, I shall get a situation as a governess and help pa, and we shall be very happy and comfortable. Dear old pa! I don't tell him how badly I'm treated here, for it would make him fret, and he'd quarrel with Madame,

or take me away, and I don't know half enough yet, even to be a nursery governess, and it would be a dreadful thing."

Again she took breath.

"You see," she resumed, "I try to learn as much as ever I can, and they do certainly teach you a lot of things here, and Madame is awfully clever. They say that she was a nun, years ago, and broke her vows at the Revolution. But I am always getting into scrapes. I can't help it. I'm merry, and it won't do to be merry here. If you want to get on, you must be grievous. I can't be grievous, and I'm continually in trouble. If it wasn't that I was wanted just now to take care of you, I ought to be in solitary confinement on bread-and-water for two days, for having got a hundred bad marks in the course of two years. Those I got for pulling your dress just made up my hundred. I'm always in arrear with half a dozen tasks, always in disgrace. I'm too big to be put en pénitence with the fool's cap on; but I'm had up almost every day to Madame's cabinet to be scolded out of my wits. I tell you, my dear, Madame's tongue hurts much worse than a ruler over your knuckles. Oh! I'm a most unhappy Marygold!"

And so she went rambling on, only too delighted to find a listener who could understand the gist of her complaints.

"And you, dear," she suddenly said, "who sent you here? Your papa?"

"I don't know anything about my papa," returned poor Lily. "They could never tell me anything about him at Mrs. Bunnycastle's. I think he must be dead, and in Heaven. I am Quite Alone."

So she was, God help her.

"And your mamma? You must have a mamma, you know, or, perhaps you are an orphan. There are four girls here who are orphans."

"I'm sure I don't know," little Lily responded, shaking her head dubiously. "The lady who brought me here said she was my mamma, but she was unkind to me, and frightened me. You oughtn't to be frightened of your mamma."

"Oh, I don't know that," interrupted the Marygold. "I used to be, dreadfully."

"Was she unkind, then?"

"No!" returned the girl, compressing her lips as though she had a great deal to say that was disagreeable, but was wishful to reveal only so much as was absolutely necessary. "She was worse than unkind. She drank, and was the ruin of poor pa. Don't talk any more about her. She's dead, and pa forgave her, as he, poor dear, hopes to be forgiven. Not that my pa's done anything to be forgiven for. He's the best of men. But we're all sinners, you know, dear. And now—oh good gracious me! you mustn't talk any more, for I've got two pages of the *Morale en Action* about that stupid old Monsieur de Montesquieu and the Marseilles boatman—it's a horrible book, and I don't believe a word of it—to learn by heart before bedtime. Taking care of you isn't to save me altogether, you see."

She turned to a much dog's-eared edition of the interesting work she had mentioned; but her assiduity in study very soon came to an end.

"No papa! No mamma that you're certain about!" she repeated, with a perplexed look. "Why, my poor dear little innocent darling you must be quite alone in the world."

"Indeed I am," said poor Lily. She did not sigh. Children seldom sigh. Suspiration is an accomplishment to be learnt, like curtseying. But her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Never mind, dear," the Marygold continued, pressing the child's hand. "We must make the best of it. You must belong to somebody, to have been sent here at all. Do you know whether you are to be brought up as a governess?"

No; Lily had not the slightest idea on that topic. As yet, she had not fathomed the possibility of anybody being "brought up" to the profession of tuition. She had a dim notion that governesses grew, or came at once to maturity, with black silk dresses and sour looks.

"It seems to me," remarked the Marygold, "that there are a great deal too many governesses in the world. I forget how many hundreds of millions of people the geography says there are on the earth; but, as far as I have seen, all the old girls seem to be governesses, and all the young girls are being brought up to be governesses. Madame turns 'em out here by the dozen, like cakes. Where the children are to come from that we are all to teach, I'm sure I don't know."

Not much progress was made in the study of M. de Montesquieu's transactions with the Marseilles boatman. The girl went prattling on to the child, and telling her she must call her Polly, and that she, Polly, would call her Lily, and that they would be as happy as the arrangements of the establishment and the severity of Madame would permit. And then it grew dusk, and at about nine o'clock, when forty girls came trooping silently to bed in Dormitory Number Three, Lily fell off into sound and refreshing slumber.

OUR BREEDS AND RACES.

For years, we might almost say for centuries, the world has come to England for horses, just as it goes to France for fashions, to China for teas, or to Spain for sherries. The connexion, indeed, has been gradually increasing upon us, until we are fain to confess that we can hold it no longer. The country is on the verge of a national bankruptcy in the item of horse-flesh. Either we have oversold ourselves, or, flushed with success, have become culpably careless of the proper conduct of the business. We have so neglected this that we have not even sufficient stock for our own wants, much less to meet the requirements of other nations, which will probably soon set up in opposition against us; very manifest, as it is, that some of them are cultivating the pursuit with earnestness and attention. Still, it cannot be said that

our own government is altogether indifferent to the importance of the matter, as a certain encouragement has long been given to the breeding of good horses.

It may be as well to state here that it is for nags, hunters, hacks, and so forth, that England has been more especially celebrated all the world over, whilst the material of these is assumed to be supplied to us direct from the turf. Racing is a national sport, officially recognised as such by the Crown, which bestows an annual grant of upwards of five thousand pounds towards the maintenance of the pastime, though it may be as well to ascertain how far the royal countenance is yet warranted. We must, in the first instance, take it as admitted that the excellence of the horse has been developed by such means; and then, curiously enough, we must proceed to trace his deterioration to the same cause. If, with more horses than ever; if, with the production of the thorough-bred, as our fountain-head, multiplied over and over again, and springing up and cropping out in every direction; if, with more stock we have a less available supply; there must be clearly something wrong in our management of the material. And, no doubt, there is something amiss. So far as any useful purpose is concerned there is no question but that the modern system of racing tends to a deal more harm than good. How can we reasonably expect to find a fair share of stout weight-carrying hunters, when the practice of the turf, whence we are to obtain our hunter-blood, is going in the opposite direction? The modern race-horse is required to be neither stout nor strong. He is no longer valued for any such properties. If he can carry six or seven stones for half or three-quarters of a mile, he is worth hundreds or thousands more than if his great merit were the ability to run four miles—as his forefathers did—with twelve stones on his back.

At the present moment there are not more than three or four such races run from one year's end to the other, while there are not more than three or four horses found ever capable of going such a distance. In fact, lasting powerful well-developed animals are no longer needed on the turf, as there is not that money to be made out of them which may be realised by a smart two-year-old, or a speedy weed that can just live over the two-year-old course. And here, on this ground—the two-year-old course—we meet with the root of the evil. In proclaiming it we are making no new discovery nor startling announcement, but simply referring to a fact as well known to the Senior Steward of the Jockey Club as it is to her Majesty's Master of the Horse. It is this pernicious practice which is surely and certainly undermining the breed of our English horses. From the outset we act in defiance of nature, as from his birth the race-horse has but an artificial existence. The law itself has been altered to suit this monstrous system, and the colt accordingly dates his age in modern times from the first

of January, instead of from the first of May. There is every incentive to have the foal born as early as possible, and he comes accordingly on some raw nipping January morn, or just when winter fairly sets in with February, to be coddled and coaxed from the hour of his birth like house-lamb, and to be sacrificed, most probably, at an early period. Thus the young one is forced, and pampered, and prematurely developed, either for sale as a yearling, or to race as early as possible in his second season. It would be unfair, though, to shut our eyes to the fact that thorough-bred yearlings have never realised such high prices as of late. So grand and well-looking have they been brought out, that the foreigners have had little chance against our own home buyers, and fortunately nearly all the best have been kept in this country. One of these magnificent, finely-grown yearlings, to whose extraordinary merits the most superlative expletives could scarcely do justice, Lord of the Hills, made eighteen hundred guineas—and never afterwards was worth as many shillings. Another, the Nugget, knocked down for fifteen hundred guineas, developed into an overgrown monster that could never be trained, and was eventually sold for a few pounds to a veterinary surgeon, who must have been puzzled what to do with his purchase. Umballah, bought as a yearling for eleven hundred guineas, was disposed of again at three years old for thirty-five guineas, without ever having appeared as a race-horse; Voivode, at a thousand and twenty guineas, ran once; and Enopides, who could never be brought out, cost one thousand guineas at one year old, and realised twenty-five guineas at three years old. Canto, at one thousand guineas, was not good enough to win even a handicap; The Avenger, at another one thousand guineas, ran but twice, and was cast out as a cripple at three years old; Greenfinch, at an investment of nine hundred and ten guineas, was a wretched plater that ran behind in selling stakes; and Automaton, whose original value was nine hundred guineas, died early in his third year. It is scarcely necessary to descend any lower on this list of bargains; but we may stop with Cellarius, an eight hundred and fifty guineas yearling, that finished his brilliant career during last season, when he won the immense amount of thirty-two sovereigns at Pontefract, and thirty sovereigns subsequently at Northallerton—a fine return on the original outlay?

These are, we believe, the highest priced yearling colts ever sold by public auction, and the majority of them amongst the worst animals, even in this degenerate age, ever handled. There are others, of course, yet to be tested; among them, Archimedes, a yearling, knocked down at the notorious sale of Lord Stamford's stud, for no less than three thousand guineas; but it must be borne in mind that this took place in December, when the yearling had, of course, been in work and possibly tried; for at her Majesty's sale in the spring he only fetched seven hundred and twenty guineas. What does all this prove? That young animals artificially

forced, and unnaturally developed, must decline as prematurely as they blossomed. Still, the majority do make some return for the system, or it could not continue. That really handsome well-furnished chesnut which has just cantered up, arching his neck and bending so beautifully to the fine hand of his rider, is only a two-year-old, in the finest possible condition. In two or three years' time, this promising colt will probably be a worn-out, broken-down, roaring, hobbling cripple, fit for nothing but the stud—and how far fit for that the present state of our breeds of horses may disclose. Youatt, in his admirable essay on Humanity to Brutes, written more than twenty years, argues that "it must be wrong to call upon the powers of any animal before the period at which nature intended that they should be fully, or nearly so, developed. That animal can never attain the state of perfection for which he was designed. Should he exhibit extraordinary strength and speed, he obtains a reputation in the sporting world which he is generally unable to sustain; for the severe measures that have been resorted to, in order to bring him up to the race, are contrary to the laws of nature. The development of the horse has been forced beyond his age. The bones never obtain their proper strength; the muscles never gain their full power; and at a future period, when greater speed and strength are expected from him if he continues on the turf, he probably deceives his backers, and is disgraced; or, at least, ere he has seen four or five years, he is evidently getting old, and is withdrawn from the turf." And then our essayist points his sketch with this sentence: "The capabilities and powers of a useful and noble animal are prematurely exhausted, and many years of valuable and pleasing existence are lost to him." The following figures, taken from the most authentic sources, will show how this evil has increased. In 1859 there were fourteen hundred and sixty-seven thorough-bred foals dropped, and of these six hundred and sixty-one ran at two years old, two hundred and ninety-two of them never afterwards appearing on the turf. Of the whole crop of foals, however, one hundred and sixty did not come out until they were three years old: while of the two-year-old performers three hundred and sixty-eight also continued to race in their third year, thus giving a total of five hundred and twenty-eight three-year-old runners. Arrived at four years old, there were but two hundred and ninety-one out of the fourteen hundred and sixty-seven foals, or of the eight hundred and twenty-one two and three-year-old runners, still fit to race! The abuse of the system may be further demonstrated by the two subjoined comparative tables:

	Two yrs.	Three yrs.	Four yrs.	Five yrs. & upwards.	
ran	ran	ran	ran	ran in all	
1802...31	117	106	280	536	
1860...608	521	302	286	1717	

It will be gathered from these figures that sixty years ago a horse was in his prime at six

years old: whereas he would now never seem to be so good as at two years old, after which age he gradually declines. In 1800 the turfite depended mainly for his sport on horses whose powers were nearly if not fully developed; whereas in 1860 his chief reliance was on two-year-olds.

The very best of our race-horses do not often survive the severity of early preparation, beyond their third year. Let us look to the Derby during the last ten years; all of the famous winners, Andover, Wild Dayrell, Ellington, Beadsman, Musjid, Kettledrum, and Caracacus, never appeared as four-year-olds, but were hopelessly gone at that age; while the renowned Blink Bonny, that did manage to make one effort as a four-year-old, was disgracefully beaten; and Macaroni, the winner in 1863, is already so infirm that he will probably never run again. The one grand exception is Thormanby, the wonder of his day, who ran repeatedly at two years old, won the Derby at three years old, and the Ascot Cup at four years old. Even premature forcing and drilling could not ruin his fine constitution, nor batter to pieces his low lengthy frame.

A really good horse is of very little value for racing purposes after he has turned three years old. His "form," as the phrase goes, is known, and there is not much further for him to do, beyond occasionally winning a royal plate or a weight for age cup, when his owner would have to lay the odds, so that very little money could be made at such a business. Money in these days is the key-stone of the turf, which must be regarded no longer as an amusement, but as a profession. Even noblemen will refuse to start their horses if they cannot get their money "on;" and the straightforward honourable old-fashioned sportsman, who always ran to win, would now be looked upon as little less than a lunatic. How could he ever expect to get well in a handicap, if he persevered in such a course? And the handicap is another great means of deteriorating the breed of horses. Perhaps there never was any better plan devised for systematically encouraging fraudulent and deceitful practices as the great handicap race, which now vies with the two-year-old stake as the chief feature of a popular race meeting. If a man have a really good animal that he wishes to place favourably in a handicap, his grand object is to make the world believe he has a bad one. Horses are frequently run for months together with such an object in view. They are sent to run, out of condition, or pulled back by their jockeys, or lose the start, or "run out" at the turns, or some other equally efficient steps are taken by which they may run to lose and not to win. At length the time comes; the real merits of the horse have been kept in the dark; he is estimated accordingly, and put down to carry an extremely light weight; and he comes out in his true colours.

These proceedings are of daily and hourly occurrence, and yet it was but a week or two since that the stewards of the Jockey Club indignantly warned an owner off the race-course

who had directed his jockey not to win. The crime was not so much one of commission, as of discovery; or what would the stewards say to the decision of some of their own Newmarket handicaps? There is a race run annually at Ascot Heath, known as the Royal Hunt Cup, but which, so far as it has anything to do with the Royal Hunt or hunters, might as appropriately be called the Royal Yacht Cup. It is a handicap run over just one mile, and nine times out of ten, it is carried off by some miserable weed with five or six stone on his back. The horse that won it last year was a four-year-old, which carried the crushing weight of five stone twelve pounds, and never won a race previously, and has now, after this tremendous performance, been taken out of work! The Royal Hunt! Was there ever such a burlesque of a title? Mark that narrow stiltly leggy animal, boring away at the unfortunate lad on his back, who has actually taken off his shirt in order to ride the weight, and may very possibly have to hang for an hour or so about the post on a raw March morning, with no better protection against the elements than a red silk jacket and a pair of the thinnest possible "continuations." Scarcely any sum would buy the ugly creature now; though he may be of no earthly service save carrying a wasted boy over half a mile of ground, and win a handicap. But then there will be some thousands pocketed if he win, and though starters may threaten and stewards may storm, he must never "go" until he is well in front, though they fine him five pounds every five minutes. At Northampton the other day, with snow still on the house-tops, an hour was consumed in starting the field for the Spencer Plate: a race of five furlongs, to which we only regret that a master of hounds, and altogether so good a sportsman as Lord Spencer, should ever give his name or his countenance.

In Ireland, where they have become seriously alarmed on the subject of horse-breeding, the Royal Agricultural Society has been taking evidence. A Mr. Farrell, says in his: "We have at present a few good two-year-olds; but we have no three-year-olds, no four-year-olds, and no five-year-olds worth anything—you could not find one. The horses bred here now would have been turned loose on the Curragh in olden time as useless. They would lie down under the weights carried long ago before they reached the end of the course. No horse bred now would have a chance for a Queen's plate with even some half-bred horses which we had thirty years ago, such as Hesperus and Barebones. I think our horses are getting worse and worse every year. I don't know a single horse of this year that could have run for the distances and with the weights of former plates—not one. At the end of the race it was a pity to see Tourist or Oldminster coming in. They had *no speed*, and appeared quite unable to carry their weights. I would not like to breed from any horse which ran for a Queen's plate this year. The poor spindly-shanked horses we have now can carry

no weight, or run any distance. They cannot keep their pace for more than a few hundred yards. If we continue to breed from these we will soon have no good horses at all in this country. They are getting more weedy every year. You could not expect a good hack-car horse from them. Our right class of horses began to decline when handicapping commenced with three-year-old and two-year-old horses. Handicapping is a very bad principle in racing, and a great cause of such a bad class of horses being now bred. Runs for two years' stakes injure us very much. No horse should be allowed to run for a Queen's plate that *has run as a two-years-old*."

This is coming to the point; but it may be asked, who is this Mr. Farrell, and what does he know about the matter? Mr. Farrell, then, although for many years a resident in Ireland, was born in England, and brought up at Newmarket in the stables of one Mr. Robson, the great trainer of his day. Mr. Farrell left for Ireland in 1814, where he himself has trained for the Marquis of Sligo, and other leading sportsmen, on the famous Curragh of Kildare. He speaks, with full acquaintance of both the past and the present: of what horses *were* in England and Ireland, and what they now *are*. We have no hesitation in saying that his is the most direct and valuable of all the opinions given; and we are glad to see that the committee, in their report, call the attention of the government to it, as the advice of "the oldest and most experienced trainer at the Curragh, and whose evidence must be considered as a faithful and important record of fifty years' intimate practical knowledge of the English and Irish turf."

Will the government turn their attention to this subject? Will they come to understand that the countenance they give to racing, as at present conducted, is simply encouraging a national evil? The five or six thousand pounds spent yearly, in providing royal plates to be run for, is money worse than thrown away. One mare took seventeen of these prizes during last season; frequently without any competitor appearing against her. Either these plates should be withdrawn, or they should be re-issued under carefully revised conditions. As Mr. Farrell says, no horse that has ever run at two years old should be allowed to run for a royal plate; and no plate should be presented to any meeting, where *any* races were under a mile, or where any horse of any age ever carried less weight than eight stone seven pounds. Of course, this would interfere materially with the betting and the handicaps, but the sooner they are interfered with the better: not merely for the breed of horses, but for the turf itself. Then, again, why should not the former weights for these royal plates be reverted to? Why should not a horse be as well able to carry twelve stone in 1864 as he was in 1800? At Salisbury, last year, the conditions were, three years old to carry seven stone eight pounds; four years old, nine stone seven pounds; five years old, ten

stone two pounds; six and "aged," ten stone four pounds; and, at Salisbury, in 1800, four years old carried ten stone four pounds; five years old, eleven stone six pounds; six years old and aged, twelve stone. The lightest weight of sixty years since was more than the heaviest of the present time. In those days, moreover, they ran four-mile heats; and now the course is a single run generally of about two miles, and rarely more than three. The longest distance now ever set at Epsom is two miles and a quarter, and the Metropolitan Stakes over this course is falling rapidly in popularity. Indeed, our decadence during the last ten years is very noticeable.

At that same Salisbury meeting in 1800, as an eye-witness assures us, any of the four horses that ran for his Majesty's plate was quite equal to carrying fourteen or fifteen stone to hounds; and one of them, Black Sultan, who ran second, was afterwards renowned as the sire of capital stout strong hunters. We are no advocates for heats, but let no Queen's plate be run at less than three miles. There is not a prettier race run at Newmarket than that over the Beacon of four miles and a furlong, and it is quite a treat to watch the horses striding away in the distance, and gradually mounting the hill home. But how seldom do we now see this course on the list? and, when during last spring we did witness a match over it, the couple finished in terrible distress. Mr. Farrell would say, "It was a pity to see them coming in." The portrait of Eclipse was taken as he went, well within himself, sweeping over the Beacon; but Eclipse never ran until he was five years old; he was a well-furnished muscular horse who could go a distance carrying a weight, and who left behind him some hundreds of sons and daughters to perpetuate his fame, and he lived and flourished to the twenty-fifth year of his age. Had he "flourished" at this era he would have been broken down before he had seen his fourth summer; or they would have condemned him as a great lumbering beast, before he had time to develop his extraordinary powers. How many a good horse is sacrificed to two-year-old stakes and short courses! Here, we repeat, is the root of the evil. It is idle to talk of farmers and others not breeding the proper stamp of horse, when we deny them the means of doing so.

The one great want of the country at this time, as it has been for some time past, is the sound and stout short-legged thorough-bred horse. Very few such horses are now to be found, simply because the present system of racing tends directly against soundness and stoutness. Or, if there be a horse of this character about, he is almost certain to be bought up for foreigners, who think little of flying performances when they can get whole colours, big bone, clean legs, and good wind. The best race of last season was that for the Ascot Cup, when Buckstone beat Tim Whiffler after they had run a dead heat. The former is a great growing horse, full of fine points, that will still develop with time, while his opponent is a

narrow light upright animal, with scarcely a good trait about him beyond his neat head and fine temper. Still, at eight stone seven pounds, he was almost equal to Buckstone: whereas, had they carried ten stone seven pounds or eleven stone, the weed could have had no chance whatever. But, mark the moral of all this:—Buckstone, a big sound powerful horse, has already been shipped off: while Tim Whiffler, so infirm that he never ran during the whole year but for that Ascot Cup, still remains at Newmarket, and is likely to remain there.

GODPAPA VANCE.

I WONDER if it would be possible now-a-days to find as lovable a little fishing town on the coast of England as South Cove was when first I knew it, or indeed knew anything; for the tall flagstaff which tops one of the pair of rocky hills that guard its deeply-curved harbours is the earliest landmark in the memories of my babyhood.

I suppose I must have watched that flagstaff and the vane atop of it from my cradle, or my nurse's knee, for the house in which I was born was nested against the opposite hill-side, and whenever (as has often been the case of late years) I dream of the tall flagstaff standing out sharp and clear from the pleasant sky of those old days, it, and the hill that it crowns, seem to rise out of the boughs of the pink-flowered almond-tree which I know grew close beneath my nursery window.

We were children together, South Cove and I, more than half a century ago. I may say that I grew with its growth, and was the loving playmate of the pretty little place, now puffed up into a "fashionable sea-side resort," in its simple pinafore days. The place has had small charm for me ever since it took a fancy for sticking glaring new crescents on its beautiful wooded brows, and girding in its swelling shores with abominable dusty esplanades; getting blowzed and overblown, in short, and banting after fine fashions and high airs, which, together with its high rents, effectually keep humble friends like me at a distance.

I have heard it said, that we never prize our most beloved ones for what they are, but for what our own heart-limming makes them. And in a measure, I suppose, so it is still, that I continue to love South Cove so dearly, touching up and varnishing over in imagination all its real remembered beauties with the jealous care of an exclusive passion; then pleasing myself by worshipping my own handiwork, and finding a sharper outline of existent reality in those airy pictures than in the present features of any other abode I may ever have on earth.

And yet I protest that the wonderful charm I find in the ideal image of my dear old sea-side home, is not in any great measure of my own creation. The place is in renown for its beauty still, and abounding indeed must have been the loveliness which could have survived the taming

and trimming of fifty years, induced by the requirements of several generations of sea-side idlers, and all the whimsies that wealth can bring about it.

So, as I said, I know the Cove better than any other spot on earth, having struck root there and twisted all the young elastic fibres of my childish fancy round about its image; and as often as I fall in with any one who knows my old love only in her full-dressed matronhood, I cannot help, if he will bear with my prosing, trying to show her to him as I see her myself, with all her wavy hills fresh as thymy green turf and weather-stained grey limestone can make them, to say nothing of her men and women, whose presence starts up, whether I please or no, in odd corners of the picture, and smile pleasant recognition on me with eyes that have, for the most part, seen their last of daylight many a year ago.

There is no need of spell or vigil to evoke such memories. Let me but wrap myself round, as it were, close and soft, in the pearl-grey mists of my native hill-sides, so as to shut out the searching sunshine and the hard worldly sights and sounds of a later time—and this grows easier and easier to do as every year rolls by—and I am sure to dream them back again from the dead, those dear old homely figures, and clasp hands with them once more in their likeness as they lived.

First in my memories as in my affections come worthy Captain Roger Vance, and Bella his wife—so stand their names on the grey slab close to the pathway, under the ancient elms of South Cove churchyard. Godpapa Vance and Aunt Bella they always were for me, though the only tie between us was that of baptismal responsibility. I call him Captain Vance because my little world of South Cove always styled him so, though I believe he had barely reached the grade of lieutenant when he left the navy ever so many years before I knew him. My father and he had been friends and middies together on board his Majesty's frigate Dreadnought in the blustering days of hard fighting and hard swearing, press-gangs, long queues, and general clashing Dutch concert of threatened invasion and Rule Britannia. I have heard my father say that Godpapa Vance never cared greatly for his profession, and was not sorry to be called home on his father's sudden death to be a comfort and companion to his widowed mother, whose only surviving child he was, and who systematically worshipped and cosseted him, till I think she must have laid the foundation for a certain leaning towards valetudinarian self-indulgence, and impatience of trifling troubles, which made part of his nature when I first took childish note of it. There stands Godpapa Vance before me now unchanged—and in all the years I knew him he never did seem to change—a little quiet-voiced man, upwards of threescore, and looking older than he was, with a small close-shaven pinkish face lighted by pale blue eyes, and dotted with small features of no particular cut or expression. His head

was small even for his small figure, high-peaked in the crown, and of such perfect polished baldness that I remember how I used profanely to long to try with my baby fingers whether it had the coldness and hardness as it had the glossiness of a china cup. What might have been the colour of his hair I could not even guess, for only a little thin fringe just above his shirt collar was left, and that was purely white in my time, whiter even than the grand powdered toupet with which he was adorned in the gold-mounted miniature Aunt Bella had of him in his uniform, and which had belonged to the Dowager Mrs. Vance, long since laid at rest.

Godpapa Vance especially affected capacious garments. His black coats, trousers, and gaifers, and stone-coloured kerseymere waistcoats, all of superfine materials and scrupulously brushed, were invariably of loose and baggy construction, and made his corporeal bulk seem less than it really was. A loose soft white handkerchief encircled his throat and rested on the broad snow-white frill of his shirt-front. He walked with a slight limp, and a painful-seeming half circular motion of the left foot at every step he took, which obliged him to lean when out of doors on a stout bamboo cane topped with ivory. He himself never spoke to us children about his lameness, but we knew for all that how he had injured his foot many years before in leaping down from a haystack on the projecting iron prongs of a pitchfork, but I must say that to me at least the possibility of such a reckless feat seemed to involve matter so derogatory to godpapa's dignity, that I had no small misgivings as to the truth of the legend, and considered his lameness as all the more mysterious.

After Captain Roger quitted the navy, and left my father blazing away at the Mounseers on board the Dreadnought, he and his lady mother lived together for several years, I fancy, in London, where she had a grim genteel mansion in some long obsolete region of propriety. Being sufficiently well born, well bred, and well off in the world, he managed to see something of society in those years beyond what encircled his doting mother's tea-table, with its knot of demure old cronies, as unchangeable as were its choice blue Nankin tea-service, the gunpowder tea, crushed sugar-candy, and subsequent pool atloo.

I know he was said to have mingled—even to very perilous extent, so thought that thrice-respectable junta—in a wild whirl of fashionable revel, and to have played his part, a quiet "walking gentleman's" part it must have been, methinks, in many a gay slipshod reckless masquerade of the wits and beauties of the metropolis. The emigration was just then pouring a very stampede of questionable fooleries and fripperies, not to say worse, into England, and the said wits and beauties were busy draping themselves in the tinselled second-hand sentimentalisms just put off perforce on many a reeking scaffold by their ill-fated brethren and sisters of France. Still I do not think that Godpapa Vance was much the worse on the whole

for either their teaching or example. His modish freaks were soon over, and left little impress behind them, except a kind of retrospective wonderment and comical self-glorification for his escape from the quicksands of the great world.

Thenceforth he gave himself up to small nibblings at art and science, which, if they placed him on no very lofty peak of knowledge, at least gave him plenty of busy trifling to fill up his time withal, and sent him trotting round to scientific meetings, till he appeared a very pundit of unfathomable lore to the simple-minded junta in mob-caps and calashes, that gathered weekly round his adoring mother's arm-chair.

All these particulars of Godpapa Vance's younger life I only knew, of course, years after the date of my first memories of him, when my childish awe for his small quiet presence, his uncertain step, and even the faint mingled perfume of Russia leather and scented snuff which clung about his clothes—though I never saw him carry or use a snuff-box—had long worn away. But even in those first, almost baby days, his easy politeness, his fluent and excellent French, his shrewd eye (even without spectacles) for a pretty or distinguished face, his hard little chart-like pencil drawings, his splendid Amati violoncello, and learned array of telescopes, microscopes, compasses, and chronometers, all in brass-bound mahogany cases, seemed to impress me with a sort of hazy consciousness of his antecedents and his character, which I vividly remember.

Captain Vance had passed his fortieth year when he chose him a helpmeet; and when he did so, and brought her home to take her place in the grim genteel mansion, and her seat beside the Nankin tea-service, and her share of the pool at *loo*, the Dowager Mrs. Vance, now grown aged and somewhat fretful, and her sympathising mob-capped chorus, felt something very like resentment at the homely choice their Crichton had made, and expressed their disapproval in the rather harsh and judicial atmosphere with which they presently surrounded the bride. Not very bride-like, I fancy, was she in those days, dear, bright, cozy, girlish-hearted Aunt Bella. Her brightness and her girlishness were all in that large heart of hers; encased in a triple envelope of comfortable embonpoint, through which scarce a gleam could get out to idealise her stodgy little person. For the bride of old Mrs. Vance's paragon son of forty, was—fearful to record!—a year or two his senior; short, stout, and rather swarthy of complexion, with no taste in dress, no elegant accomplishments, no high blood, and hardly any money!

I wonder still, as I have often wondered in old days, whether Godpapa Vance when he married Aunt Bella—we called her aunt from sheer affection, and the clinging desire to make ourselves, as it were, akin with her—I wonder, I say, whether her husband had really any clear definite idea of his own transcendent wisdom in the selection. That he knew she worshipped him I have no doubt, for those clear little

brown eyes of hers could never have kept in the secret; but did his precise ledger-like mind fully conceive with what an angel in the house he had provided himself for all his time to come; did he know how she would utterly efface and forget herself and her claims month after month, year after year, in rocking the poor invalid captious mother-in-law into semi-content with the tender cradle-song of her blessed good temper, and even be able to hush up and smooth away the sick woman's querulous whimperings and pettish accusations against himself, when the claims of his archaeological, or astronomical, or entomological friends kept him, nothing loth, evening after evening away from her couch; when the gunpowder tea had grown tasteless to her, and the *loo* distracting, and the calashed junta a batch of chatterboxes, and nothing would do but the poor short swarthy round-about God-given daughter-in-law to sit and tend her en permanence, and wear out her own last years of middle life as a poorly paid sick-nurse for ever on duty? If Godpapa Vance foreboded one half of this his bride's priceless dowry of blessings, or as the light she was to shed on his own life even to its end, when he proposed marriage to plain Miss Bella Hammond, he must have had higher wisdom in him than all his 'ologies could teach.

In time—but it must have been a weary time even for Aunt Bella's patience—old Mrs. Vance left her couch for the family vault, and her son sold the grim genteel mansion, and went with Aunt Bella to lead a quite new life somewhere in one of the midland counties, in the near neighbourhood of a large cathedral town, where the advantages (to use the house-agent's phrase) of pure country air, pleasant society, and good medical attendance, were all combined. A good doctor had come to be by this time an important item in the list of Captain Vance's comforts; for he had already begun to cosset himself into the possession of sundry pet ailments, of which the tender cares wherewith his wife surrounded him were not likely to make him think the less. Probably there was little beyond mere fancy in the whole fabric of suspicious symptoms of strange disease which his nervous fears were for ever totting up into a deadly sum total. He used to keep a diary of them, interspersed with casual notices of fly-fishing, star-gazing, and quartette-playing; while the incidental doses wherewith he continually mortified his inner man were jotted down in red ink on the margin of the page; bolus, draught, or potion, beautifully inscribed in clear round text characters.

Could eyes profane have peeped into this diary, bound neatly and curiously in parchment by his own hands, they would have seen such passages as the following:

“ Thursday, May 6th. Threatenings of head ache, and strange uneasiness about right kneecap, after copying four pages of Donovan's index. Can it be commencement of white swelling?

“ Mem.: To look in Dr. Carver's book for premonitory symptoms. Set lower drawer of

my shells in order, and found that the labels of four specimens of *Patella vulgata* had come unglued.

"Mem.: To fasten them on more carefully.

"Quartette evening at Shawe's. Haydn's Q. in G. Bow-hand weak. Tried an adagio from Beethoven's *Rasounoffsky* set. Head too confused to count time. All gave it up, and went back to Corelli.

"Mem.: To look up signs of predisposition to Hydatids in brain in Carver's book. Came home late. Rain. Fear I took cold. Bella still up, making white wine whey."

Here, in the margin, in red ink:

"Four grains rhubarb, two pills, lotion for knee. Very little good from either."

Turning over the leaf, the eyes profane aforesaid might trace on the chronicle as follows :

"Friday, 7th. Knee a little relieved, but same queer feeling about left elbow. Never heard of white swelling there.

"Mem.: Not to forget Carver. Never can be too sure. Broiled kidney for breakfast. Throat a little husky, as on Monday. Heard last night of old woman dying of quinsy somewhere near. Must be careful of cold. Additional flannel waistcoat.

"Put off going out with rod till next week. Received sixth volume of Sowerby. Strange that they should always come on a Friday.

"Transit of Jupiter. Cloudy. Could make out nothing. Think something is amiss with lens.

"Mem.: Write to Dollond's about it.

"Rain again. Chilly. Bella walked into town to see about my linsey-woolsey socks.

"Mem.: To ask Dr. Fayle if any cases of ague in neighbourhood. Tried to finish copying outlines of *Pholas dactylus* in pencil from Montagu's *Testacea Brit.*, but hand shook sadly, and suffered from drowsiness. Forced to leave off. To bed early.

"Mem.: To look into Carver for lethargy."

And in the margin of the page again the red ink rubric :

"Nervous mixture twice. Port wine gargle. Additional blanket."

So passed away more years. Godpapa Vance spent them partly in small flirtations with the sciences, partly in those mild Corelli-loving quartette parties, or in unobtrusive quaverings at a select glee club in the town, and partly in fishing excursions along the surrounding trout-streams, in the service of which new hobby he laid in expensive fishing-tackle, enough to furnish the anglers of three counties with rod and line for a lifetime, and invariably returned from his piscatory pilgrimages with a cargo of new diseases, and a list of new symptoms and surmises wherewith to try the tenderness and temper of dear Aunt Bella.

A short time before I was born, when my father, having just gained his post-captaincy and lost an arm in action, retired from the navy on half-pay, and settled at South Cove, Captain Vance began to find out that his midland home was, after all, too damp for him, and so broke

up his establishment, sold his library, and one-half of his mahogany cases, and set up his rest close beside his old messmate, in the house where I knew him, and which he and Aunt Bella inhabited thenceforward as long as they lived.

Number three, Meadow-row! There it stands again, that long-demolished palace of delights of my childhood—of delights not without their spice of awe and heart-quaking—for Godpapa Vance was a tremendous personage in my eyes, and his tiny study an arsenal of fearful wonders, whose learned perfume somehow seemed to ooze out through its listed door (always locked except when he was sitting within), and pervade the whole side of the house on which it opened. A little, pale, drab-coloured house it was, which, like its neighbours, was built against the slope of a hill. They had a road in front of them, and each had its little railed square garden, like an old-fashioned flowered handkerchief spread out on the further side of the road. Beyond and between the blossoming shrubs which hedged these gardens were seen fragments of roofs and chimney-pots, for the street (so called by courtesy) which led into the Cove was on a much lower level than Meadow-row, and kept its ugliness, as much as a street could do, perdu behind the lilacs and meze-reons, while the beautiful blue sea flashed and trembled in the sunshine away to the left in an undulating emerald goblet of hills, with a few tall spiky masts rising up from their anchorage into the sky, and right in front, beyond the huddled buildings of the little town, stood out, rough with fir-trees and grey limestone blocks, the sturdy height we used to call Stony Point, on whose venerable flank some narrow flights of moss-grown and broken steps went meandering up to a beautiful wood path far above the sea, and were fully visible from Meadow-row.

Outside, it was a meek little Quakerish house, consisting of ground floor and first floor only, with four windows in front, each having an arched cornice above it like a surprised eyebrow, and an unsophisticated street door, framed in a little arched recess, which seemed a rudimentary porch, and up which a luxuriant white jessamine was carefully trained. There was a narrow lane, with a high garden wall, which separated the house on one side from its fellows, and ended in a steep, awkward, rugged flight of steps (South Cove was rife in such steps then), leading to the brow of the hill. A prim little kitchen door, and two more up-stairs windows, opened on this lane, and all round the basement story, raised a foot or two above the level of the road, was a narrow-railed flower-border, with tufted edgings of delicate white campanulas and London-pride, enclosing knots of white and tiger lilies, and bushes of the finest and most luscious cabbage-roses I ever saw or smelt.

Inside, a tiny hall led to the foot of a tiny staircase. On the left was the dining-room (eating-room, Aunt Bella always called it),

where tall cupboard doors in the further wall, brass-latticed and lined with blue, shut in no end of marvellous dainties and curious confections in brown glazed pots and squat green bottles. On the right was a similar chamber, with a similar cupboard, sacred to godpapa's cast-off phials, gallipots, and pill-boxes. I suppose it was my knowledge of the mysteries of this repository, together with the fact that the blind of its one window was generally kept down, and the sash obstinately closed against the scent of the great good-humoured cabbage-roses, that made me rather shy of entering its precincts, especially towards dusk. But over and above these reasons for hesitation there hung above the chimney-piece a tall old grimy oil-painting of the famous race-horse Chilvers, held by an ill-favoured cadaverous jockey in a yellow jacket (the said jockey quite out of all drawing, and ridiculously diminutive compared to the steed), which excited in me something very like terror, and made me think of all sorts of ghostly chargers galloping through old ballads and legends which I had no business ever to have heard of, till I expected to see the smoke-blackened horse shake its unnaturally-arched neck and bony head at me, and the jockey stretch out those skinny fingers that clutched his whip, to reach me shivering at the other side of the dusky room.

Before turning up the small steep staircase, one caught a glimpse of a dark passage and a baize door leading to the little court, the cozy baby-house, kitchen, and the diminutive stable. Ah! the Apician feasts that issued from that baize door! What bisques, or ortolans, or pâtés de foie gras of after days have ever come up to the crisp fried soles; the fair, portly boiled fowls; the deep, sugar-sweet, juicy damson-pies (creamed), which had their birth in that delicious region! There reigned Keziah the cook, twice too voluminous for her small domain, ruddy of skin and pale of hair, which always reminded me of the tight little tow curls on wooden poodles. With what a piping voice out of the bulk of that abounding person she used to welcome me, generally with the gift of some delicate cheesecake put by for me from the day's baking; what time I was conveyed into her dominions by Tackett, the parlour-maid, for the ostensible purpose of paying my respects to surly Bet, the brindled Tom cat, who, by the same unexplained fiction which gave him his feminine appellation, was always spoken of in the family as "she," and who usually resided, when at home, in the hottest corner of the large tin-lined plate-warmer. I remember that I regarded the said Bet with feelings of awe-struck reserve, owing chiefly to the ruffianly expression imparted to his bullet head by ears tattered in many a midnight fray, and one eye scarred and drawn down in unseemly fashion by some mêlée on the leads. My acquaintance with Bet never seemed to progress in all the years I knew him, and on all occasions of our limited intercourse Tackett was wont, by Aunt Bella's express command, to lift him gingerly out of his

warm nest, and hold him, sulkily blinking, towards me, with his rusty fore-paws carefully enveloped in the folds of her spotless white apron. I think I see the good soul now, performing the presentation ceremony! Bony and lank she was, with a certain Judy-like angularity of form and raiment, which gave me the impression of her being made to fold up, and never coming quite straight at the joints.

How plainly I recal her kindly freckled face, which seemed all the longer for the nose stopping short midway between the forehead and chin, her iron-grey strips of hair forming two regular little festoons above the friendly eyes, and her invariable lilac and yellow cap-ribbon, bending over me, small mite as I was, while I timidly paid my compliments to her muffled burden, and curiously watched her deposit it again in the chimney-corner.

On the little landing-place at the top of the stairs opened the doors of godpapa's study and Aunt Bella's sitting-room. In this latter chamber I was almost sure to find her on those high red-letter days when, leaving my little brothers and sisters in the detested trammels of a deaf governess and Goldsmith's Abridgment, I was promoted to the signal honour of dining and passing the evening in Meadow-row. Her seat was beside one of the windows, two of which looked towards the sea and the shadowy copse wood of Stony Point, and a third towards the road leading up to Meadow-row. Her sight was beginning to fail her even in those early days, dear soul! and before her death she lost it almost entirely; but she was always busy when I came in, sometimes with certain long narrow strips of snow-white lambswool netting, sometimes over a little green baize-covered frame with rattling bobbins, wherone she manufactured silken staylaces and braiding of gay colours, while I stood by, delightedly watching the mysteries of its confection, as her delicate little brown hands (a pretty hand and foot were Aunt Bella's chief beauties) ordered the mazes of the truant threads with that instinctive skill and tact which tells so sadly of coming blindness.

The first hour or two of my visit to Aunt Bella was sure to be spent in this cheerful sitting-room. It was rather low-ceiled, rather misshapen, with an arch somehow cutting it across the middle where no arch should be, and a dove-coloured and white paper on the walls rather the worse for wear, and bearing, as to its design, a resemblance to sheaves of monster stinging-nettles. The carpet was dove-coloured and green, dove-coloured and green the chintz of the curtains and furniture, and it was very sunny, very quiet, and pleasantly fragrant with huge posies of pinks or carnations all the summer long. There stood the marvel of art, the bright-rubbed mahogany table, the middle portion of whose upper surface slid out, and, being turned over, displayed, to my never wearied view, the wonders of an inlaid chess-board and draught-board in beautifully shaded

woods, while appliances for backgammon occupied the uncovered recess below.

There, too, in a queer corner niche behind the large china-bowl, with its bunch of white and pheasant-eyed pinks, or dark red clover, and coquettish pink carnations, was the precious sarcophagus-like casket of black shagreen with silver claws and lock, within which lived, in faded red velvet, three beautifully chased little silver canisters of old Louis Quatorze fashion, which used to be solemnly displayed by Tackett for my special delectation. They had graced the tea-table of ancient mother-in-law Vance, as they had that of her mother before her, in company with the Nankin china, what time godpapa had brought his poor little dark-skinned bride home to be its sunshine, and I delighted to trace out the mailed arm with a dagger which was the family crest, and the strangely twisted M.V., standing for Millicent Vance, which lurked half hidden among the graceful boss-work and tracery. I believe the tiny canisters were never used even on the grandest occasions in Meadow-row, and a small portion of the crusty old mother-in-law's delicate green and black tea, and a few small lumps of sparry-looking sugar, yet lurked (as my inquisitive childish eyes soon found out) in their recesses, giving the whole apparatus, I could not have told why, a delightful flavour of mysterious antiquity to me.

Sometimes, but this was not in those remotest days of all, Aunt Bella would be coaxed to tell me stories as dinner-time drew near; and then she and I and the braiding-frame took up our station at the window commanding those erratic flights of steps on the flank of Stony Point, and I had to keep watch the while, and give her warning as soon as I saw godpapa, easily distinguishable by his halting gait and his green umbrella, making his slow way down them crab-fashion. I verily believe that one of the sharpest pangs Aunt Bella felt under the misfortune of her loss of sight, was the fading out of that beloved figure, fainter and ever fainter month by month, as she watched its return at the accustomed hour. I remember a wistful straining look in her loving hazel-brown eyes, turned towards the well-known path as often as I announced godpapa's approach, and then a sudden dropping of the lids and a patient struggling little sigh, whose significance I feel now far better than I could then.

The story-telling was always broken off when godpapa loomed on the horizon; but it was very delightful while it lasted, though my favourite giants and enchanters performed no parts in it. I do not think Aunt Bella had much taste for the marvellous, for I know I more than once set her nodding over her netting-pins by my rambling attempts to interest her in the loves of Badours and Camaralzaman (he wrote his name so in my day, though I suppose it has long since been correctly broken up into syllables), and the midnight journey through the air of fair-faced Bedreddin of the cream-tarts from Cairo to Damascus in the arms of a

jinn or geni, as we ignorantly phrased it, when Monsieur Galland's bad translation re-translated was our ne plus ultra of romance.

A LESSON WELL LEARNT.

WHEN the shadow of death hung over the Italian campaign, from which Italy knew how to take more liberty than it was meant that she should have, a citizen of Geneva, M. Henri Dunant, had his heart strengthened for noble labours by the recollection of the work done by Florence Nightingale in the Crimea. If there must be wars, why may they not be fought out by civilised nations with common recognition of the common duties of humanity? What if there were a General European Sanitary Commission? By his energetic labour competent men of many countries were brought together last year in the International Congress upon this question at Geneva—our Inspector-General of Hospitals, then representing Great Britain, by authority of our Secretary of War, with competent official deputies from France, and from Austria, and from Russia, and from Prussia, Italy, Spain, Sweden, Bavaria, Wurtemburg, Baden and Hesse, Hanover and Holland.

We know not what may come of the movement thus commenced, but we are glad to learn, from a little book called "A Woman's Example and a Nation's Work" (published by Ridgway), that in the midst of all the miseries of civil war in America the lesson taught by Florence Nightingale has not been lost upon a kindred people. The newspapers tell all the battle stories, and have enabled us to sup full of the horrors of the strife. Of the pity, and the deeds of mercy it engenders, we have not been told all we might hear.

The women on each side connected themselves at the outbreak of the war with the great work of healing and solace. The South has assuredly and certainly not been behind the North in generous self-sacrifice, but from the South few records come to us as yet; at present it is only of what has been done in the North that we can tell the tale.

The women began their work of mercy by filling churches, schoolrooms, and the large houses of many wealthy persons, with lint-scrapers, cutters, folders, and packers of the linen they gave to the use of the wounded. Then they organised themselves, first in New York, into a "Woman's Central Association of Relief;" like bodies were constituted elsewhere, and advice was sought from men of experience. They were advised to ascertain what government could and would do in the direction to which their work tended, then to work with it, and by their own liberality of gifts and labour, supplement its unavoidable short-comings. The clergyman of New York, who was foremost in giving this counsel, the Rev. Doctor Bellows, accompanied by three of the chief physicians of New York, Doctors Van Buren, Harris, and Harsen, went, therefore, in deputation

to Washington for conference with the Secretary of War. They represented not only the "Woman's Central Association," but also the Advisory Committee of the Boards of Physicians and Surgeons of the New York hospitals, and the New York Medical Association for furnishing Hospital Supplies in aid of the Army. The three bodies were all acting harmoniously together in turning to the best account the free gifts from the City and State of New York, designed in aid of the comfort and security of the troops. They petitioned for some rigour in inspection of volunteers, that unsuitable persons might not be sent to certain death in the army; the Woman's Association was about to send for service in the general hospitals of the army one hundred picked and trained female nurses, and they asked that the War Department should be content to receive on wages during actual duty as many of such nurses as the exigencies of the campaign might require. They suggested, also, the appointment of a Sanitary Commission, which President Lincoln scoffed at as a "fifth wheel to the military coach." This memorial was very coldly received by the War Department and the Medical Bureau of the army. The United States Sanitary Commission, which has by this time turned to right use in works of health and mercy, voluntary contributions amounting to about two millions of money, got its first lift towards existence in a note of recommendation from Dr. R. C. Wood, acting surgeon-general to the United States army.

The four delegates then at once sent in a sketch of the plan of such a commission, specifying all they asked for it from the government; no new legal powers whatever, and none of the public money; but simply official public recognition during the war, or until it should be found unserviceable, and a room in one of the public buildings in Washington or elsewhere with stationery and other insignia of a recognised public office. The object of the desired commission would be "to bring to bear upon the health, comfort and morale of the troops, the fullest and ripest teachings of sanitary science in its application to military life;" directing particular attention, for example, to the materiel of the volunteer force, and to such subjects as diet and cookery, clothing, and precaution against damp, cold, heat, malaria, infection &c.; tents, camping-ground, transports, transitory depôts with their exposures, camp police; organisation of hospitals, hospital supplies, regulations of the patriotic service of the capable women offering themselves as nurses; the questions of ambulances, of field service, of extra medical aid, and whatever else relates to the care or cure of the sick and wounded.

Reluctant consent was at last given to the establishment of such a commission, in a document of which the last paragraph thus expressed the official contempt it excited: "The commission will exist until the Secretary of War shall otherwise direct, *unless sooner dissolved by its own action.*" It is something to know that there is a Circumlocution Office across the Atlantic.

Yet at that time the army suddenly quadrupled was deficient in the commonest requisites of clothing, bedding, and hospital staff, while the local soldier's aid societies founded in different districts for the succour each of its own particular body of volunteers, bewildered by the marchings and counter-marchings of the distant regiments, were wasting much good energy. One of the first difficult labours of the Commission was to prove to these local bodies the short-sightedness of their provincial allies, and get them to throw all their resources into the organisation of one common national work. One by one the work of woman's love that strove to follow the particular fortunes of brothers and friends was gathered into one great national effort, and the local aid societies became branches of the commission, with Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted for its secretary, that strove to secure the well-being of the army, and detect the more unwholesome blots upon its discipline wherever they might be. Influential men in every part of the country now became unpaid advocates of the commission as "Associate Members;" circulars setting forth the wants of the army were widely diffused; sanitary agitation was kept up; directors of insurance companies were made to understand their interest in the well-being and the health of the volunteer.

Then it was found necessary to break down the exclusiveness of state sovereignty, and, for right organisation of the conveyance of the bales provided for use of the sick, establish central depôts for districts, determined not by political predilections, but by the course of railways, rivers, and canals. One hundred and twenty towns thus became auxiliary to Cleveland in Ohio, and twelve hundred and twenty-six accepted the City of New York as their centre. The Commission sent also sanitary inspectors to the camps and camp hospitals, and has received and tabulated some fifteen hundred of their reports, each consisting of answers to a set of one hundred and eighty printed questions.

Meanwhile, the government had taken no step towards the organisation for war purposes of the Medical Bureau, beyond the appointment of a Surgeon-General, who at once pronounced against the Sanitary Commission, and declared that "he would have nothing to do with it;" for it was "a perilous conception to allow any such outside body to come into being." The Commission, however, having been already authorised by government, he consented to its action for the volunteers on condition that it never meddled with the regular troops.

This wonderful gentleman confined himself to the maintenance of every old regulation, and resisted every attempt at "innovation" to adapt what might have sufficed for the case of a bush-fighting army of twelve thousand, to the greater needs of a tremendous civil war. So there arose civil war between the Sanitary Commission and the Surgeon-General; and the Commission, working by deputations to the government, complaints from army officers, and

memorials to Congress, procured the passing of a bill, drawn up by its own Executive Committee, reorganising fundamentally the medical department of the army, appointing a body of general inspectors, and substituting for the old system of seniority, promotion for competency without regard to grade or age. This victory over routine having been won, the Commission itself sought the most competent man for Surgeon-General, and endeavoured to forestall any chance of an appointment by favouritism into which the Secretary of War might be tempted. The Commission again won its battle, and secured the promotion of Dr. W. A. Hammond, Assistant-Surgeon on the Medical Staff, to the post of Surgeon-General, an advance from the rank of first lieutenant, with charge of a single hospital, to that of brigadier-general, with the entire control of the Medical Department of the Army. With its own man—a competent man, who had every reason to be grateful to it—thus in authority, the Sanitary Commission had its way made very straight. Dr. Hammond revised his list of subordinates with a bold hand, got rid of the obstructive and incompetent men, and honestly sought the best help in organisation of hospitals, foundation of an army medical school, and so forth. Before the civil war, the United States army rivalled the Austrian in exclusiveness and firm adherence to routine; and who can tell what tales of pestilence we might have heard, but for the victory thus won on behalf of woman's work in time of peril?

A part of the business of the Sanitary Commission was to diffuse gratuitously among the army surgeons, practical pamphlets of information upon military hygiene, and the most important points of army medicine and surgery. Such pamphlets were the "Directions to Army Surgeons on the Battle-field," by our own Guthrie, and the "Advice as to Camping," issued by the British Sanitary Commission at the time of the Crimean war; pamphlets on "Pain and Anæsthetics," and on "Hemorrhage from Wounds, and the best Means of Arresting it," by the father of American surgery, Dr. Valentine Mott; pamphlets on army vaccination, amputations, treatment of fractures, scurvy, fevers, &c. The largely increased number of army surgeons had to be drawn from civil life, and really needed information as to the new forms of practice in the field; while everywhere the teachings of Florence Nightingale were actively diffused. Again, over the wide surface of the states involved in war, there was great variation of latitude, and almost every imaginable difference of ground, producing local differences in the character and aspect of disease. Special investigation was made of this subject, not only for the information of the medical staff, but as a necessary guide to the right distribution of the requisite supplies.

When, at the beginning of the war, the lines of action corresponded with the course of navigable rivers, floating hospitals accompanied the armies. Here, with perhaps five hundred or a thousand

sick soldiers arranged in a single river steamer, well-born American women and some English volunteers were fearless and faithful nurses. Let us see them at work. A lady speaks:

"We were called to go on board the Wissahickon, from thence to the Sea-shore, and run down in the latter to West Point, to bring off twenty-five men said to be lying there sick and destitute. Two doctors went with us. After hunting an hour for the Sea-shore in vain, and having got as low as Cumberland, we decided (*we* being Mrs. —— and I, for the doctors were new and docile, and glad to leave the responsibility upon us women) to push on in the tug, rather than leave the men another night on the ground, as a heavy storm of wind and rain had been going on all day. The pilot remonstrated but the captain approved; and if the firemen had not suddenly let out the fires, and detained us two hours, we might have got our men on board and returned comfortably soon after dark. But the delay lost us the precious daylight. It was night before the last man was got on board. There were fifty-six of them—ten *very* sick ones. The boat had a little shelter-cabin. As we were laying mattresses on the floor, whilst the doctors were finding the men, the captain stopped us, refusing to let us put typhoid fever below the deck, on account of the crew, he said, and threatening to push off, at once, from the shore. Mrs. —— and I looked at him. I did the terrible and she the pathetic,—and he abandoned the contest. The return-passage was rather an anxious one. The river is much obstructed with sunken ships and trees; the night was dark; and we had to feel our way, slackening speed every ten minutes; If we had been alone it wouldn't have mattered. but to have fifty men unable to move upon our hands, was too heavy a responsibility not to make us anxious. The captain and pilot said the boat was leaky, and remarked awfully 'that the water was six fathoms deep about there'; but we saw their motive and were not scared. We were safe alongside the Spaulding by midnight; but Mr. Olmsted's tone of voice, as he said, 'You don't know how glad I am to see you,' showed how much he had been worried. And yet it was the best thing we could have done, for three, perhaps five, of the men would have been dead before morning. To-day (Sunday) they are living, and likely to live."

A plan for the swift construction of a good receiving hospital, the notion of great soup caldrons on wheels for feeding the sick and wounded after battle, scrofulous inspection, active agitation and investigation of the question of what is to be done in the future with the disabled soldiers of three years of war, are among the wholesome work of the Commission, which has been able, after every great battle, to despatch a voluntary contribution of necessaries, in addition to the provision made by the medical department of the army. Thus, after the second battle of Bull Run—when General Pope's army, with a loss of sixteen thousand in killed and wounded, was in retreat—the Confederates had

captured forty-three waggon-loads of medical stores. Within three days, sixteen waggon-loads of drugs and medicines, the gift of the country through the Sanitary Commission, were at the disposal of the army; and at Centreville, on the road from Bull Run to Washington, the Commission's agents served out to the wounded, who came fainting in by hundreds, hot beef-tea, soup and bread, and stimulants—gathered them into ambulances or hospitals—and otherwise helped them on to Washington. The Commission has always extended such help alike to friend or foe; the wounded Confederate who has been captured has been simply regarded as a sufferer.

These labourers on behalf of humanity even work under fire in the field relief corps that trot up their light waggons with stores, bandages, or other aid to the surgeons wherever men fall fastest, and after the battle hunt indefatigably for the straggling wounded. The Commission has organised, also, a distinct department of Special Relief for care of the sick among newly-arrived regiments; for providing temporary and gratuitous shelter and food to the soldier honourably discharged, while he is waiting in any city for his papers and his pay; for helping the helpless soldier in any conceivable way, by acting as his unpaid agent, or attorney; for protecting him against sharpers, or getting him railway tickets at reduced rates. With such views soldiers' "Homes" have been established throughout the North, and at the principal Home in Washington about a hundred thousand nights' lodgings, and three or four hundred thousand meals, have been gratuitously provided. The Commission has obtained Homes, too, for its own and the army's nurses when not in attendance on the sick, or preparing to depart for distant stations. Finally, the Commission charges itself with the duty of seeing that every soldier is decently buried, with a head-stone over his grave, and that a record is kept of the place of burial; or, that his body is forwarded to his friends.

The funds that support all this good work are voluntary gifts. The people of California sent, in one sum, the gold of their soil to the value of a hundred thousand pounds English money. Sanitary fairs have been lately held at different towns, at Chicago, Cincinnati, Rochester, Washington, &c. Brooklyn Fair lately contributed four hundred thousand dollars; and from the great fair just held at New York a million dollars were expected.

The Commission works openly; any one who will, may inspect its books. It pays its officers, buys waggons, charters ships, feeds horses and mules, pays rent of offices and warehouses, yet the entire cost of its management is under three per cent of its income. When, at the battle of Gettysburg, a waggon-load of the Commissioners' stores was captured, with three of its agents, the secretary of the Commission asked and obtained from the Confederate authorities their release, on the ground that they were non-combatants, and that throughout the war "the Sanitary Commission had never made any distinction in its benevolence between friend and foe."

If any one would estimate the value of such work in pursuance of a good example, let him remember that Miss Nightingale and the Crimean Commission found the British army in the East dying from disease at the rate of sixty per cent, or more than half its whole strength, in the year; and that, sanitary care having been taken, the death rate was reduced in the last five months of the campaign to twelve in a thousand! The army was made fifty-two times healthier! Our whole average yearly loss by disease in the Peninsular war, was a hundred and thirteen in a thousand; and the sanitary reforms made by Lord Herbert in the home life of our infantry are saving us now, every year, one life in every hundred men. The whole loss in our army by all diseases has been less in each of the last four years than it used to be from diseases of the lungs alone.

Most nobly have the American People struggled to amend this part of the record of their own disastrous struggle. We read much of sharp trading and selfish grasping, of boots with paper soles, and other cruel dealings of the wooden nutmeg school; but the support given by the American People (not American Contractors) to their armies, through the Sanitary Commission, tells a nobler tale. Thus, for example, it may seem a small matter that the Commission makes part of its preventive work to consist in the raising of fresh vegetables for army use; but without fresh vegetables troops can hardly be saved from scurvy. Dr. Frank H. Hamilton, a distinguished medical inspector in the army of Rosecrans, expressed, in a report, his full belief that "one barrel of potatoes per annum is to the government equal to one man." At one time, when the success of the western army, in a hazardous operation, was becoming hopeless, by reason of scurvy among the troops, and when the consequent advertisement of a commissary for fifty thousand bushels of potatoes and a corresponding supply of other vegetables found no trader able or willing to be responsible for their delivery, the Commission set to work, and, collecting voluntary gifts in kind from the fields and gardens of the districts, supplied gratuitously, within a month, six thousand barrels of fresh vegetables, restored the health of the troops, and so, though a non-combatant, did really, by a brisk discharge of potatoes, change in that campaign the fortune of the war.

A RENT IN A CLOUD.

IN TWENTY-FOUR CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XII. DARKER AND DARKER.

THERE was an unusual depression at the villa—each had his or her own load of anxiety, and each felt that an atmosphere of gloom was thickening around, and, without being able to say why or wherefore, that dark days were coming.

"Among your letters this morning was there none from the vicar, Mr. Calvert?" asked Miss Grainger, as he sat smoking his morning cigar under the porch of the cottage.

"No," said he, carelessly. "The post brought me nothing of any interest. A few reproaches from my friends about not writing, and relieving their anxieties about this unhappy business. They had it that I was killed—beyond that, nothing."

"But we ought to have heard from old Mr. Loyd before this. Strange, too, Joseph has not written."

"Stranger if he had! The very mention of my name as a referee in his affairs will make him very cautious with his pen."

"She is so fretted," sighed the old lady.

"I see she is, and I see she suspects, also, that you have taken me in your counsels. We are not as good friends as we were some time back."

"She really likes you, though—I assure you she does, Mr. Calvert. It was but t'other day she said, 'What would have become of us all this time back if Mad Harry—you know your nickname—if Mad Harry had not been here?'"

"That's not liking! That is merely the expression of a weak gratitude towards the person who helps to tide over a dreary interval. You might feel it for the old priest who played piquet with you, or the Spitz terrier that accompanied you in your walks."

"Oh, it's far more than that. She is constantly talking of your great abilities—how you might be this, that, and t'other. That, with scarcely an effort, you can master any subject, and without any effort at all always make yourself more agreeable than any one else."

"Joseph excepted?"

"No, she didn't even except him; on the contrary, she said, 'It was unfortunate for him to be exposed to such a dazzling rivalry—that your animal spirits alone would always beat him out of the field.'"

"Stuff and nonsense! If I wasn't as much his superior in talent as in temperament, I'd fling myself over that rock yonder, and make an end of it!" After a few seconds' pause he went on: "She may think what she likes of me, but one thing is plain enough—she does not love him. It is the sort of compassionating, commiserating estimate imaginative girls occasionally get up for dreary depressed fellows, constituting themselves discoverers of intellect that no one ever suspected—revealers of wealth that none had ever dreamed of. Don't I know scores of such who have poetised the most common-place of men into heroes, and never found out their mistake till they married them!"

"You always terrify me when you take to predicting, Mr. Calvert."

"Heaven knows, it's not my ordinary mood. One who looks so little into the future for himself has few temptations to do so for his friends."

"Why do you feel so depressed?"

"I'm not sure that I do feel depressed. I'm irritable, out of sorts, annoyed if you will; but not low or melancholy. Is it not enough to make one angry to see such a girl as Florry bestow her affections on that—Well, I'll not

abuse him, but you *know* he is a 'cad'—that's exactly the word that fits him."

"It was no choice of mine," she sighed.

"That may be; but you ought to have been more than passive in the matter. Your fears would have prevented you letting your niece stop for a night in an unhealthy locality. You'd not have suffered her to halt in the Pontine Marshes; but you can see no danger in linking her whole future life to influences five thousand times more depressing. I tell you, and I tell you deliberately, that she'd have a far better chance of happiness with a scamp like myself."

"Ah, I need not tell you my own sentiments on that point," said she, with a deep sigh.

Calvert apparently set little store by such sympathy, for he rose, and throwing away the end of his cigar, stood looking out over the lake. "Here comes Onofrio, flourishing some letters in his hand. The idiot fancies the post never brings any but pleasant tidings."

"Let us go down and meet him," said Miss Grainger; and he walked along at her side in silence.

"Three for the Signor Capitano," said the boatman, "and one for the signorina," handing the letters as he landed.

"Drayton," muttered Calvert; "the others are strange to me."

"This is from Joseph. How glad poor Florry will be to get it."

"Don't defer her happiness, then," said he, half sternly; "I'll sit down on the rocks here and con over my less pleasant correspondence." One was from his lawyer, to state that outlawry could no longer be resisted, and that if his friends would not come forward at once with some satisfactory promise of arrangement, the law must take its course. "My friends," said he, with a bitter laugh, "which be they?" The next he opened was from the army agents, dryly setting forth that as he had left the service it was necessary he should take some immediate steps to liquidate some regimental claims against him, of which they begged to enclose the particulars. He laughed bitterly and scornfully as he tore the letter to fragments and threw the pieces into the water. "How well they know the man they threaten!" cried he, defiantly. "I'd like to know how much a drowning man cares for his duns!" He laughed again. "Now for Drayton. I hope this will be pleasanter than its predecessors." It was not very long, and it was as follows:

"The Rag, Tuesday.

"Dear Harry,—Your grateful compliments on the dexterity of my correspondence in the Meteor arrived at an unlucky moment, for some fellow had just written to the editor a real statement of the whole affair, and the next day came a protest, part French, part English, signed by Edward Rochfort, Lieutenant-Colonel; Gustavus Brooke, D.L.; George Law, M.D.; Alberic de Raymond, Vicomte, and Jules de Lassagnac. They sent for me to the office to see the document, and I threw all

imaginable discredit on its authenticity, but without success. The upshot is, I have lost my place as 'own correspondent,' and you are in a very bad way. The whole will appear in print to-morrow, and be read from Hudson's Bay to the Himalaya. I have done my best to get the other papers to disparage the statement, and have written all the usual bosh about condemning a man in his absence, and entreating the public to withhold its judgment, &c. &c.; but they all seem to feel that the tide of popular sentiment is too strong to resist, and you must be pilloried; prepare yourself, then, for a pitiless pelting, which, as parliament is not sitting, will probably have a run of three or four weeks.

"In any other sort of scrape, the fellows at the club here would have stood by you, but they shrink from the danger of this business, which I now see was worse than you told me. Many, too, are more angry with you for deserting B. than for shooting the other fellow; and though B. was an arrant snob, now that he is no more you wouldn't believe what shoals of good qualities they have discovered he possessed, and he is 'poor Bob' in the mouths of twenty fellows who would not have been seen in his company a month ago. There is, however, worse than all this: a certain Reppingham, or Reppengham, the father of B.'s wife, has either already instituted, or is about to institute, proceedings against you criminally. He uses ugly words, calls it a murder, and has demanded a warrant for your extradition and arrest at once. There is a story of some note you are said to have written to B., but which arrived when he was insensible, and was read by the people about him, who were shocked by its heartless levity. What is the truth as to this? At all events, Rep has got a vendetta fit on him, and raves like a Corsican for vengeance. Your present place of concealment, safe enough for duns, will offer no security against detectives. The bland blackguards with black whiskers know the geography of Europe as well as they know the blind alleys about Houndsditch. You must decamp, therefore; get across the Adriatic into Dalmatia, or into Greece. Don't delay, whatever you do, for I see plainly, that in the present state of public opinion, the fellow who captures you will come back here with a fame like that of Gérard the lion-killer. Be sure of one thing, if you were just as clean-handed in this business as I know you are not, there is no time now for a vindication. You *must* get out of the way, and wait. The clubs, the press, the swells at the Horse Guards, and the snobs at the War-office, are all against you, and there's no squaring your book against such long odds. I am well aware that no one gets either into or out of a scrape more easily than yourself; but don't treat this as a light one; don't fancy, above all, that I am giving you the darkest side of it, for, with all our frankness and free speech together, I couldn't tell you the language people hold here about it. There's not a man you ever bullied at mess, or beat at billiards, that is not

paying off his scores to you now! And though you may take all this easily, don't undervalue its importance.

"I haven't got — and I don't suppose you care much now to get — any information about Loyd, beyond his being appointed something, Attorney-General's 'devil,' I believe, at Calcutta. I'd not have heard even so much, but that he was trying to get a loan, to make out his outfit, from Joel, and old Isaacs told me who he was, and what he wanted. Joel thinks, from the state of the fellow's health, that no one will like to advance the cash, and if so, he'll be obliged to relinquish the place. You have not told me whether you wish this, or the opposite.

"I wish I could book up to you at such a moment as this, but I haven't got it. I send you all that I can scrape together, seventy odd; it is a post bill, and easily cashed anywhere. In case I hear of anything that may be imminently needed for your guidance, I'll telegraph to you the morrow after your receipt of this, addressing the message to the name Grainger, to prevent accidents. You must try and keep your friends from seeing the London papers so long as you stay with them. I suppose, when you leave, you'll not fret about the reputation that follows you. For the last time, let me warn you to get away to some place of safety, for if they can push matters to an arrest, things may take an ugly turn.

"They are getting really frightened here about India at last. Harris has brought some awful news home with him, and they'd give their right hands to have those regiments they sent off to China to despatch now to Calcutta. I know this will be all 'nuts' to you, and it is the only bit of pleasant tidings I have for you. Your old prediction about England being a third-rate power, like Holland, may not be so far from fulfilment as I used to think it. I wonder shall we ever have a fireside gossip over all these things again? At present, all looks too dark to get a peep into the future. Write to me at once, say what you mean to do, and believe me as ever, yours,

"A. DRAYTON.

"I have just heard that the lawyers are in doubt as to the legality of extradition, and Braddon declares dead against it. In the case they relied on, the man had come to England after being tried in France, thinking himself safe, as 'autrefois acquit'; but they found him guilty at the Old Bailey, and — him. There's delicacy for you, after your own heart."

Calvert smiled grimly at his friend's pleasantry. "Here is enough trouble for any man to deal with. Duns, outlawry, and a criminal prosecution!" said he, as he replaced his letter in its envelope, and lighted his cigar. He had not been many minutes in the enjoyment of his weed, when he saw Miss Grainger coming hastily towards him. "I wish that old woman would let me alone, just now!" muttered he. "I have need of all my brains for my own misfortunes."

"It has turned out just as I predicted, Mr. Calvert," said she, pettishly. "Young Loyd is furious at having his pretensions referred to you, and will not hear of it. His letter to Florence is all but reproachful, and she has gone home with her eyes full of tears. This note for you came as an enclosure."

Calvert took the note from her hands, and laying it beside him on the rock, smoked on without speaking.

"I knew everything that would happen!" said Miss Grainger. "The old man gave the letter you wrote to his son, who immediately sat down and wrote to Florry. I have not seen the letter myself, but Millie declares that it goes so far as to say, that if Florry admits of any advice or interference on your part, it is tantamount to a desire to break off the engagement. He declares, however, that he neither can nor will believe such a thing to be possible. That he knows she is ignorant of the whole intrigue. Millie assures me that was the word, intrigue; and she read it twice over to be certain. He also says something, which I do not quite understand, about my being led beyond the bounds of judgment by what he calls a traditional reverence for the name you bear—but one thing is plain enough, he utterly rejects the reference to you, or, indeed, to any one now but Florence herself, and says, 'This is certainly a case for your own decision, and I will accept of none other than yours.'"

"Is there anything more about me than you have said?" asked Calvert, calmly.

"No, I believe not. He begs, in the postscript, that the enclosed note may be given to you, that's all."

Calvert took a long breath; he felt as if a weight had been removed from his heart, and he smoked on in silence.

"Won't you read it," cried she, eagerly. "I am burning to hear what he says."

"I can tell you just as well without breaking the seal," said he, with a half scornful smile. "I know the very tone and style of it, and I recognise the pluck with which such a man, when a thousand miles off, dares to address one like myself."

"Read it, though; let me hear his own words!" cried she.

"I'm not impatient for it," said he; "I have had a sufficient dose of bitters this morning, and I'd just as soon spare myself the acrid petulance of this poor creature."

"You are very provoking, I must say," said she, angrily, and turned away towards the house. Calvert watched her till she disappeared behind a copse, and then hastily broke open the letter.

"Middle Temple, Saturday.

"Sir,—My father has forwarded to me a letter which, with very questionable good taste, you addressed to him. The very relations which subsisted between us when we parted, might have suggested a more delicate course on your part. Whatever objections I might then, however, have made to your interference in matters

personal to myself, have now become something more than mere objections, and I flatly declare that I will not listen to one word from a man whose name is now a shame and a disgrace throughout Europe. That you may quit the roof which has sheltered you hitherto without the misery of exposure, I have borne in my letter to narrate the story which is on every tongue here; but, as the price of this forbearance, I desire and I exact that you leave the villa on the day you receive this, and cease from that day forth to hold any intercourse with the family who reside in it. If I do not, therefore, receive a despatch by telegraph, informing me that you accede to these conditions, I will forward by the next post the full details which the press of England is now giving of your infamous conduct, and of the legal steps which are to be instituted against you.

"Remember distinctly, sir, that I am only in this pledging myself for that short interval of time which will suffer you to leave the house of those who offered you a refuge against calamity—not crime—and whose shame would be overwhelming if they but knew the character of him they sheltered. You are to leave before nightfall of the day this reaches, and never to return. You are to abstain from all correspondence. I make no conditions as to future acquaintance, because I know that were I even so minded, no efforts of mine could save you from that notoriety which a few days more will attach to you, never to leave you.

"I am, your obedient servant,
"JOSEPH LOYD."

Calvert tried to laugh as he finished the reading of this note, but the attempt was a failure, and a sickly pallor spread over his face, and his lips trembled. "Let me only meet you, I don't care in what presence, or in what place," muttered he, "and you shall pay dearly for this. But now to think of myself. This is just the sort of fellow to put his threat into execution, the more since he will naturally be anxious to get me away from this. What is to be done? With one week more I could almost answer for my success. Ay, Mademoiselle Florry, you were deeper in the toils than you suspected. The dread of me that once inspired a painful feeling had grown into a sort of self-pride that elevated her in her own esteem. She was so proud of her familiarity with a wild animal, and so vain of her influence over him! So pleasant to say, 'See, savage as he is, he'll not turn upon me!' And now to rise from the table, when the game is all but won! Confound the fellow, how he has wrecked my fortunes! As if I had not enough, too, on my hands without this!" And he walked impatiently to and fro, like a caged animal in fretfulness. "I wanted to think over Drayton's letter calmly and deliberately, and here comes this order, this command, to be up and away—away from the only spot in which I can say I enjoyed an hour's peace for years and years, and from the two or three left to me, of all the world, who think it

no shame to bestow on me a word or a look of kindness. The fellow is peremptory—he declares I must leave to-day." For some time he continued to walk, muttering to himself, or moodily silent. At last he cried out, "Yes; I have it! I'll go up to Milan, and cash this bill of Drayton's. When there, I'll telegraph to Loyd, which will show I have left the villa. That done, I'll return here, if it be but for a day; and who knows what a day will bring forth?"

"Who has commands for Milan?" said he, gaily entering the drawing-room, where Miss Grainger sat, holding a half-whispering conversation with Emily.

"Milan! are you going to Milan?"

"Yes; only for a day. A friend has charged me with a commission that does not admit of delay, and I mean to run up this afternoon, and be down by dinner-time to-morrow."

"I'll go and see if Florry wants anything from the city," said Miss Grainger, as she arose and left the room.

"Poor Florry! she is so distressed by that letter she received this morning. Joseph has taken it in such ill part that you should have been consulted by Aunt Grainger, and reproaches her for having permitted what she really never heard of. Not that, as she herself says, she admits of any right on his part to limit her source of advice. She thinks that it is somewhat despotic in him to say, 'You shall not take counsel except with leave from me.' She knows that this is the old vicar's doing, and that Joseph never would have assumed that tone without being put up to it."

"That is clear enough; but I am surprised that your sister saw it."

"Oh, she is not so deplorably in love as to be blinded."

CHAPTER XIII. AGAIN TO MILAN.

"Poor Bob! You were standing on that balcony with a very jaunty air, smoking your Cuban the last time I passed here," said Calvert, as he looked up at the windows of the Hôtel Royal at Milan, while he drove on to another and less distinguished hotel. He would have liked greatly to have put up at the Royale, and had a chat with its gorgeous landlord over the Reppingshams, how long they stayed, and whither they went, and how the young widow bore up under the blow, and what shape old Rep's grief assumed.

No squeamishness as to the terms that might have been used towards himself would have prevented his gratifying this wish. The obstacle was purely financial. He had told the host, on leaving, to pay a thousand francs for him that he had lost at play, and it was by no means convenient now to reimburse him. The bank had just closed as he arrived, so there was nothing for it but to await its opening the next morning. His steps were then turned to the Telegraph-office. The message to Loyd was in these words: "Your letter received. I am here, and leave to-morrow."

"Of course the fellow will understand that I have obeyed his high behest, and I shall be back at Orta in time to catch the post on its arrival, and see whether he has kept faith with me or not. If there be no newspapers there for the villa I may conclude it is all right." This brief matter of business over, he felt like one who had no further occasion for care. When he laid down his burden he could straighten his back, no sense of the late pressure remaining to remind him of the load that had pressed so heavily. He knew this quality in himself, and prized it highly. It formed part of what he used boastfully to call his "Philosophy," and he contrasted it proudly with the condition of those fellows who, instead of rebounding under pressure, collapsed, and sunk never to rise more. The vanity with which he regarded himself supplied him with a vindictive dislike to the world, who could suffer a fellow endowed and gifted as he was to be always in straits and difficulties. He mistook—a very common mistake, by the way—a capacity to enjoy, for a nature deserving of enjoyment, and he thought it the greatest injustice to see scores of well-off people who possessed neither his own good constitution nor his capacity to endure dissipation uninjured. "Wretches not fit to live," as he said, and assuredly most unfit to live the life which he alone prized or cared for. He dined somewhat sumptuously at one of the great restaurants. "He owed it to himself," he said, after all that dreary cookery of the villa, to refresh his memory of the pleasures of the table, and he ordered a flask of Marco-brunner that cost a Napoleon.

He was the caressed of the waiters, and escorted to the door by the host. There is no supremacy so soon recognised as that of wealth, and Calvert, for a few hours, gave himself up to the illusion that he was rich. As the Opera was closed, he went to one of the smaller theatres, and sat out for a while one of those dreariest of all dreary things, a comedy by the "immortal Goldoni!" Immortal indeed, so long as sleep remains an endowment of humanity! He tried to interest himself in a plot wherein the indecency was only veiled by the dulness, and where the language of the drawing-room never rose above the tone of the servants' hall, and left the place in disgust, to seek anywhere, or any how, something more amusing than this.

Without well knowing how, he found himself at the door of the Jettone, the hell he had visited when he was last at Milan.

"They shall sup me, at all events," said he, as he deposited his hat and cane in the ante-chamber. The rooms were crowded, and it was some time before Calvert could approach the play-table, and gain a view of the company. He recognised many of the former visitors. There sat the pretty woman with the blonde ringlets, her diamond-studded fingers carelessly playing with the gold pieces before her; there was the pale student-like boy—he seemed a mere boy—with his dress-cravat disordered, and his hair dishevelled, just as he had seen him last; and there was the old man, whose rouleau had cost

Calvert all his winnings. He looked fatigued and exhausted, and seemed as if dropping asleep over his game, and yet the noise was deafening—the clamour of the players, the cries of the croupier, the clink of glasses, and the clink of gold!

"Now to test the adage that says when a man is pelted by all other ill luck, that he'll win at play," said Calvert, as he threw, without counting them, several Napoleons on the table. His venture was successful, and so was another, and another after it.

"This is yours, sir," said she of the blonde ringlets, handing him a hundred franc-piece that had rolled amongst her own.

"Was it not to suggest a partnership that it went there?" said he, smiling courteously.

"Who knows?" said she, half carelessly, half invitingly.

"Let us see what our united fortunes will do. This old man is dozing, and does not care for the game. Would you favour me with your place, sir, and take your rest with so much more comfort on one of those luxurious sofas yonder?"

"No!" said the old man, sternly. "I have as much right to be here as you."

"The legal right I'm not going to dispute. It is simply a matter of expediency."

"Do you mean to stake all that gold, sir?" interrupted the croupier, addressing Calvert, who, during this brief discussion, had suffered his money to remain till it had been doubled twice over.

"Ay, let it stay there," said he, carelessly.

"What have you done that makes you so lucky?" whispered the blonde ringlets. "See, you have broken the bank!"

"What have I done, do you mean in the way of wickedness?" said he, laughing, as the croupiers gathered in a knot to count over the sum to be paid to him. "Nearly everything. I give you leave to question me—so far as your knowledge of the Decalogue goes—what have I not done?" And so they sauntered down the room, side by side and sat down on a sofa, chatting and laughing pleasantly together, till the croupier came loaded with gold and notes to pay all Calvert's winnings.

"What was it the old fellow muttered as he passed?" said Calvert; "he spoke in German, and I didn't understand him."

"It was something about a line in your forehead that will bring you bad luck yet."

"I have heard that before," cried he, springing hastily up. "I wish I could get him to tell me more;" and he hastened down the stairs after the old man, but when he gained the street he missed him; he hurried in vain on this side and that; no trace of him remained. "If I were given to the credulous, I'd say that was the fiend in person," muttered Calvert, as he slowly turned towards his inn.

He tried in many ways to forget the speech that troubled him; he counted over his winnings;

they were nigh fourteen thousand francs; he speculated on all he might do with them; he plotted and planned a dozen roads to take, but do what he might, the old man's sinister look and dark words were before him, and he could only lie awake thinking over them till day broke.

Determined to return to Orta in time to meet the post, he drove to the bank, just as it was open for business, and presented his bill for payment.

"You have to sign your name here," said a voice he thought he remembered, and, looking up, saw the old man of the play-table.

"Did we not meet last night?" whispered Calvert, in a low voice.

The other shook his head in dissent.

"Yes, I cannot be mistaken; you muttered a prediction in German as you passed me, and I know what it meant."

Another shake of the head was all his reply.

"Come, come, be frank with me; your secret, if it be one to visit that place, is safe with me. What leads you to believe I am destined to evil fortune?"

"I know nothing of you! I want to know nothing," said the old man, rudely, and turned to his books.

"Well, if your skill in prophecy be not greater than in politeness, I need not fret about you," said Calvert, laughing; and he went his way.

With that superstitious terror that tyrannises over the minds of incredulous men weighing heavily on his heart, he drove back to Orta. All his winnings of the night before could not erase from his memory the dark words of the old man's prediction. He tried to forget, and then he tried to ridicule it. "So easy," thought he, "for that old withered mummy to cast a shadow on the path of a fellow full of life, vigour, and energy, like myself. He has but to stand one second in my sunshine! It is, besides, the compensation that age and decrepitude exact for being no longer available for the triumphs and pleasures of life." Such were the sort of reasonings by which he sought to console himself, and then he set to plan out a future—all the things that he could, or might, or could not do.

Just as he drove into Orta the post arrived at the office, and he got out and entered as was his wont, to obtain his letters before the public distribution had commenced.

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